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Volume 127, Issue 25, wilcoxnewspapers.com • 269-657-3072 USPS 564-620

Mattawan Schools non-homestead operating millage on May ballot

MATTAWAN - On May 5, Mattawan Consolidated School will ask voters to renew its Non-Homestead Operating Millage for another four-year term. The millage rate is currently 19.4227, with the maximum being levied at any point is 18 mills.

The district last renewed this millage in August 2022 for a period of four years. It is set to expire at the end of 2026. To receive full State Foundation Grant funding, public schools must levy 18 mills of operating millage on non-homestead properties.

This proposal does not impact taxes on primary residential or agricultural properties; only second homes, investment, commercial and industrial properties are affected. This is not an increase in taxes, but a renewal of the school district's current levy.

The non-homestead millage currently provides more than $4 million in revenue, or just over nine percent, of the Mattawan Consolidated School's annual general fund operating budget. The district's general fund operating budget provides funding for staff salaries and benefits; all academic programming and supplies as well as athletics; transportation and building and grounds operations; technology, textbooks and other district capital purchases.

A vote to renew this levy is critical; this money cannot be replaced with other funding sources. Even though primary residential taxes are not affected, state law requires a district-wide election to approve this renewal.

The non-homestead operating millage is subject to the Headlee Rollback, which means when property values rise at a greater pace than the rate of inflation the non-homestead tax levy will be "Headlee reduced". By having a millage rate available of 19.4227, it allows the district a "buffer" in the event of a Headlee Rollback so the mills levied do not go below 18 mills, a situation where the district would lose operating funding. At no point will more than 18 mills be levied on non-homestead properties.

Deputies find suspect hiding in garage, charged with multiple felonies

ALMENA TWP. - Van Buren County Sheriff Daniel Abbott reported on April 9, at approximately 9:15 p.m., Van Buren County Sheriff's deputies were dispatched to the 25000 block of M-43 in Almena Township for a reported assault.

Upon arrival and investigation, deputies learned that a 31-year-old Paw Paw man had gone to the residence, where he was sprayed with bear repellent and struck with a blunt object. The victim recognized the suspect as a 30-year-old Paw Paw man. The victim was able to escape the scene and contact law enforcement.

Deputies searched for the suspect and the homeowner throughout the night but were unable to locate them. The victim was transported to a local hospital, where he was treated for minor injuries and decontaminated.

On April 10, at approximately 8:30 p.m., deputies were dispatched back to the same residence. A 28-year-old female homeowner reported that her ex-boyfriend had returned and shot her vehicle with a paintball gun.

During the investigation, deputies determined that this individual was the same suspect involved in the assault the previous night. After assaulting the male victim, the suspect forced the female homeowner to drive him from the scene and conceal him. She was eventually able to escape, at which time the suspect fired a paintball gun at her vehicle.

Following an extensive search of the area, including the deployment of a K-9 unit, deputies determined the suspect was hiding in a nearby garage. The building had been locked and barricaded from the inside. Deputies made entry and, with the assistance of Van Buren County K-9 Charlie, conducted a search. K-9 Charlie located the suspect hiding in a small room, where he had attempted to conceal himself under various items.

The suspect was taken into custody without incident and transported to the Van Buren County Jail.

He is currently facing multiple felony charges, including felonious assault, unlawful imprisonment, possession of a pneumatic gun during the commission of a felony, resisting and obstructing police, arson of personal property, and interfering with electronic communications.

Former court administrator's sentencing rescheduled

The sentencing for a former county court administrator who pleaded guilty to embezzling over $100,000 is being rescheduled.

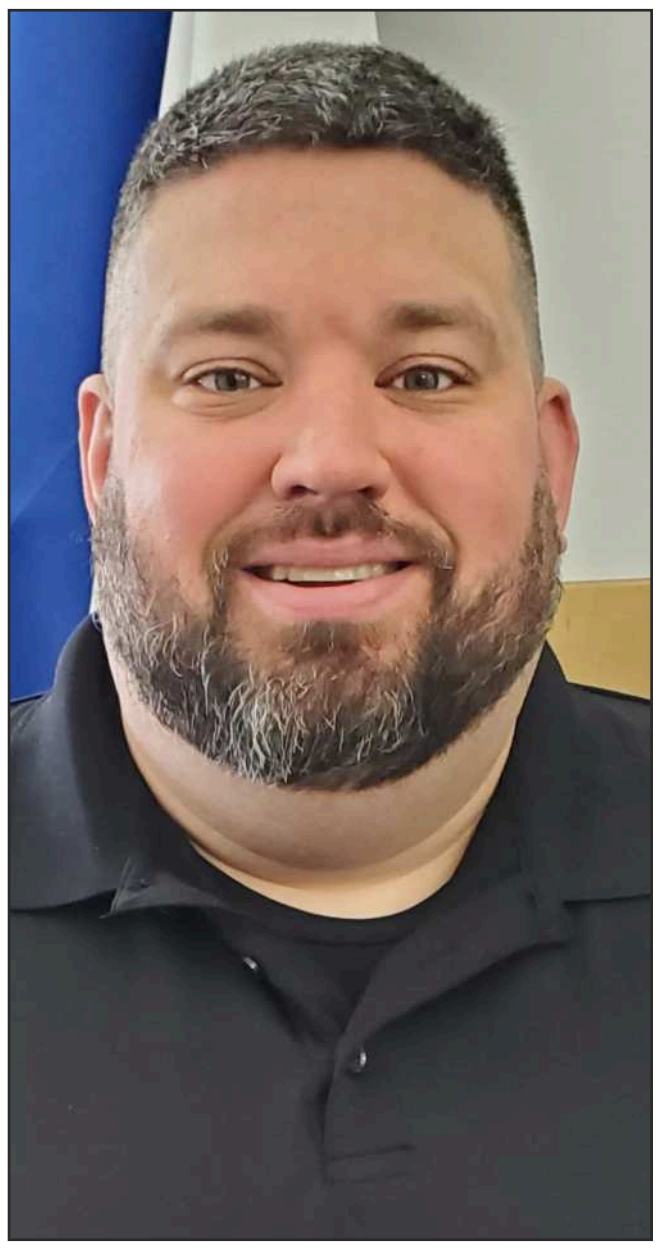
Rachel Celeste Lindley, 42, a former Paw Paw resident, began working for Van Buren County as the Specialty Courts Administrator in 2016 before moving into the Trial Court Administrator position in April 2021, managing millions in grants for Van Buren County treatment courts along the way.

As Specialty Courts Administrator, Lindley included new programming such as Sobriety Court, offering specialized treatment and supervision for people charged with operating while intoxicated and a dedicated Family Reunification Court, designed to reunify children with their parents, according to a release from court officials.

In August, a Michigan State Police (MSP) investigation into Lindley led to her arrest and subsequent felony charges for embezzlement of $100,000 or more and embezzlement by a public official.

https://bit.ly/4cL8sOf

New county veterans services director named



Michael Fossitt, shown above, was recently promoted to Van Buren County Veterans Services Director. Fossitt previously served as a Van Buren County Veterans Services Officer. Fossitt is a Paw Paw native and a decorated Army veteran who served with the Proud Americans and Black Lions during his deployment to Iraq. The county VS office is in the Old Time Capsule Museum, located in downtown Paw Paw. The building is accessible with a single-level entry for veterans and families. Veterans and others have access to a common area for networking and a computer center for accessing helpful sites like VA.gov and MyHealthyVet. TeleHealth appointments may also be conducted there as well as participation in VA Appeals Court via Zoom.

Courier-Leader photo/ Paul Garrod

Benefit Concert to Feature Jean Watson

PAW PAW - A benefit concert featuring recording artist Jean Watson will be held Sunday, April 19, at 3 p.m. at the Paw Paw United Methodist Church. 420 W. Michigan Ave.

Watson is a singer, violinist, recording artist, author, and speaker from southwest Michigan. Since 2003, she has been inspiring audiences around the world through her words and music. She speaks and performs frequently in the United States and Ireland where she hosts a radio show on UCB Ireland. She is also a published author with Seedbed Publishers in Franklin, TN.

Watson recently returned from tours in Southern California and Ireland. She is getting ready to release her 13th full length album next month, produced by Nashville veteran, Jonathan Crone and featuring a guest performance by Russ Taff.

When she's not recording or traveling, Watson enjoys playing violin in the Kalamazoo Symphony, spending time with her family, and riding her horse, Juniper.

The benefit concert is being held as a fundraiser for Van Buren County area food pantries. It was recently announced that the Van Buren County CROP Hunger Walk, held for more than 40 years, would not be continued this spring by the Van Buren County CROP Hunger Walk Committee.

Those attending the benefit concert are encouraged to bring a non-perishable food item that will be distributed equally among six area food pantries. Financial donations will also be accepted. Checks may be made out to the Paw Paw United Methodist Church and write Jean Watson in the memo line.

Watson said 2024 promises to be an exciting year full of new adventures in her music and ministry. "It's only March, and already the calendar has included trips to Montana, Wisconsin,

and Pennsylvania. At the end of April, my daughter and I will be headed to France, and later this year, I'll be performing in New York, Florida, and California."

She added, "I am also headed back to Nashville to record a new album of original songs at the end of May. I am very happy to still be writing and recording."

She continued, "There is plenty to do right here in Michigan, as well, as I perform at the "Praise on the Pier" series this summer in Grand Haven, and lead worship on Sunday mornings at New Hope Family Church in Paw Paw."

Watson concluded, "When I am home, I still play in the Kalamazoo Symphony from time to time and enjoy spending time with my husband, Mark, my children and grandchildren, and my horse, Lacey Mae. It's a full life, for sure. I am very honored to again be helping raise support for the Van Buren County CROP Hunger Walk

Vineyard Chicks, a three-sister musical group, will open the concert. The sisters are Kayla, Trie, and Bunkie. Kayla began her musical career on the piano at the age of two, while Trie plays the drums, and Bunkie provides rhythm and leads on guitar and melodica.

In addition to performing Christian-based songs, the trio are also well versed in other music genres. Kayla sings lead on pop and R&B songs. Trie sings lead on classic rock and alternative rock and Bunkie sings lead on country and modern diva songs.

The girls formed Vineyard Chicks three years ago (the name was developed from their Lawrence area farm which features a vineyard and chickens) and played their first official gig at the 2023 Van Buren Youth Fair. It was at that fair where the girls competed for several years in the Youth Talent Show. They will return to the 2025 fair on Monday night, July 14, following the talent show. The concert will be featured as part of the band's Livestreddfdfdddam Music Mondays, at 9 p.m. on YouTube @vineyardchicks.

Other social media outlets for the band include TikTok: @vineyardchickssisters; and YouTube: @vineyardchicks.

The girls have already amassed more than 6,000 followers on social media.

Daily postings are featured on TikTok, and weekly studio recordings may be found on YouTube.

Vineyard Chicks is also streaming on Spotify, Apple Music and more.

The band is currently in the process of recording another EP.

U.S. Ambassador Bridget Brink opens speakers' series 12th season

The South Haven Speakers Series opens its 12th season on Thursday, April 30, with a compelling presentation by Bridget Brink, former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine.

"Why Ukraine and Eastern Europe Matter," is the ambassador's topic as she draws on her first-hand experience during one of the most consequential geopolitical conflicts of the modern era. Brink served in Ukraine during the early years of Russia's invasion and brings rare insight into the war, its global implications, and the future of the region.

Before her posting in Ukraine, Brink served as U.S. Ambassador to Slovakia and held key diplomatic roles in Georgia and other international assignments. Her distinguished career in the U.S. Foreign Service has focused extensively on Eastern Europe and security issues affecting the region.

The program will begin at 7 p.m. at Lake Michigan College South Haven Campus, 125 Veterans Blvd.

A special reception from 6 to 6:45 p.m. will give attendees an opportunity to meet Ambassador Brink before the presentation according to Series board member Janice Varney.

"This is an extraordinary opportunity for our community to hear directly from a highly experienced diplomat on a topic that continues to shape world events," said South Haven Speakers Series Board member Joan Bauer. "Ambassador Brink's perspective from inside Ukraine during the war will make this a dynamic and timely opening to our 12th season." She concluded.

Admission is $10, and students are admitted free.

For more information, visit: southhavenspeakerseries.org

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Hartford drug house filled with illegal drugs, firearms, one arrested

HARTFORD TWP. – Van Buren County Sheriff Daniel Abbott reported that detectives with the Van Buren County Sheriff's Office Narcotics Unit and SWAT Team executed a search warrant in the 66000 block of 62nd Street in Hartford Township on April 9, at approximately 8:40 a.m., according to a press release from the Van Buren County Sheriff's Office.

Two subjects were inside the residence at the time the search warrant was executed. A 45-year-old Hartford-area man was transported to the Van Buren County Jail, Paw Paw, while the female was released at the conclusion of the investigation.

During the execution of the search warrant, detectives located multiple controlled substances, digital scales, packaging materials, and several firearms. Most of the narcotics were concealed within a hidden compartment inside a bedroom wall. Detectives utilized a reciprocating saw to access the compartment and recovered approximately 10 grams of methamphetamine.

Charges to be sought include the following: maintaining a drug house, possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine, possession of oxycodone, possession of suboxone, felon in possession of firearm(s), possession of a short-barrel shotgun, felon in possession of ammunition, and two counts of unlicensed dogs.

Detectives were unable to locate serial numbers on the recovered firearms at the scene. The firearms will be submitted to the Michigan State Police Crime Laboratory for further analysis, including potential serial number restoration. Deputies from Van Buren County Animal Control responded to assist with multiple dogs at the residence. During their investigation, it was determined the dogs were unlicensed. Animal Control also noted they have received numerous prior complaints regarding these dogs running at large.

Assisting agencies included the Lawton and South Haven police department, Van Buren County Animal Control, and the Van Buren County Sheriff's Office SWAT Team.

OBITUARIES

Beverly Jean (Pompey) Brooks

Beverly Jean (Pompey) Brooks, 90, of Paw Paw, Michigan, went to be with her Lord and Savior on Jan. 28, 2026, after a sudden illness. Bev, as she was known to most everyone, was born Sept. 11, 1935, the daughter of the late Kenneth and Gladys Pompey of Hartford.

Bev graduated from Hartford High School in 1954. She continued her education by obtaining her LPN and RN nursing degrees at Kellogg Community College and Southwestern Michigan College, respectively. Much of her nursing career was spent at Bronson LakeView Hospital in Paw Paw. She dedicated over 40 years to patient care in multiple capacities as an LPN, RN, Nurse Manager, and Childbirth Educator. Her primary focus being obstetrics, Bev was instrumental in the development of birthing rooms and family centered care. She received the Southwestern Michigan Perinatal Association's Perinatal Award for Excellence in 1992 and 1999. She retired from nursing in 1999.

Bev's hobbies included gardening and traveling, and she had an enormous love for music. She also enjoyed updating family history records and photo albums. She was a member of the Paw Paw United Methodist Church. She enjoyed spending time with her grandchildren and attending their activities.

Bev married her high school sweetheart, Robert (Bob) Brooks, in Hartford at the Federated Church on July 3, 1954. Together, they enjoyed traveling on many trips. Bev especially enjoyed spending the winters with her husband in their park model home on Sarasota Bay in Florida.

Bev resided in Hartford most of her school years, and after marriage, settled in Paw Paw with Bob.

After 57 years of marriage, her husband, Bob, passed away due to cancer on Father's Day in 2011.

She is survived by her sons, Bryan Brooks of Defiance, OH, Barry Brooks of Washington State, and Brad (Michelle) Brooks of Lawton. Bev leaves six grandchildren, Sarah, Jackie, Brandy, Seth, Brandon, and Lev; and four great-grandchildren, Robert, RyLynn, Asher, and Vivian.

Other survivors include her sister, Marcia (John) Molter of Watervliet; brother-in-law Franc (Betty) Brooks of Schoolcraft; sister-in-law, Wanda Story of Buchanan, as well as many nieces, nephews, and cousins.

In keeping with Bev's wishes, she will be cremated. Family and friends are invited to visit on Friday, April 24, from 11 a.m. to noon at Adams Funeral Home, 502 W. Michigan Ave., Paw Paw. A memorial service will begin at noon with Pastor Austin Kreutz officiating.

Memorial contributions may be directed to Centrica Care Navigators.

Share a memory or sign the online guestbook at adamspawpaw.com

Mervyn William Bremmer III

August 2, 1946 - March 29, 2026

Mervyn William Bremmer III, of Lawton, Michigan, passed away peacefully at home on March 29, 2026, after a short illness, with his loving family by his side.

He was born on August 2, 1946, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Mervyn attended South High School, where he was actively involved in band, ROTC, and the Order of DeMolay. He proudly served his country with two years in the Navy Reserve and two years of active duty in the United States Navy.

On August 28, 1965, Mervyn married the love of his life, Patricia Doty. Together they shared 60 wonderful years of marriage and built a strong, loving family. He was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather.

Mervyn is survived by his beloved wife, Patricia Bremmer; his sons, Mervyn William Bremmer IV, Jim (Marcie) Bremmer; his grandchildren, Haylie (Charles) Douglas, Dacoda Bremmer, Ty Bremmer, Ethan Bremmer, and Trent Bremmer; his step-grandchildren, Blake (Grace) Parker and Chase Parker; his great-grandsons, Jace Douglas and Ashton Douglas; as well as step-great-grandchildren, Becca and Owen Parker. He is also survived by two brothers and two sisters.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his sister, and his son, Al Bremmer.

Mervyn dedicated 30 years of service to the Portage Police Department, where he was respected for his commitment to his community. He also found great joy in coaching youth sports in Lawton, positively impacting many young lives.

After retirement, Mervyn embraced life to the fullest. He enjoyed fishing trips to Canada, riding his Gold Wing motorcycle, going on cruises, and most importantly, spending time with his family.

A Celebration of Life will be held for family and friends on Saturday, May 2, 2026, from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM at the Paw Paw Eagles Club. Burial with honors will take place at Fort Custer National Cemetery on Monday, May 4, 2026, at 10:30 AM.

Mervyn will be deeply missed and lovingly remembered by all who knew him.

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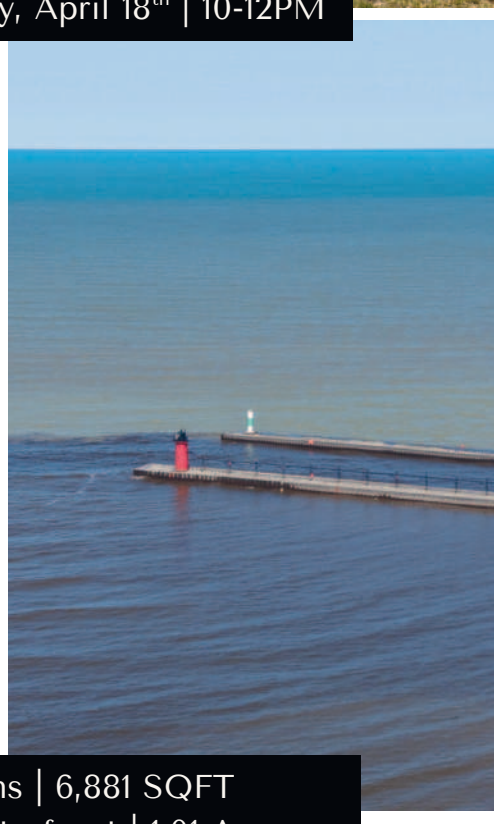
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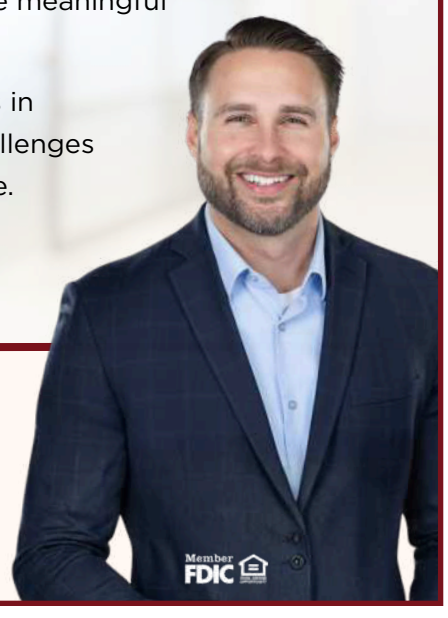
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2ND FRONT PAGE

Van Buren County Museum to open May 1

HARFTFORD – The Van Buren County Historical Museum, 58471 Red Arrow Highway, Hartford, will open its 2026 season at noon on Friday, May 1, with dozens of rooms on four floors, with each room full of county history.

"Everyone will find something interesting at the Van Buren County Museum," said Museum President Sandy Merchant.

The museum is open Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays, from noon to 5 p.m.

On Sunday, April 19, at 2 p.m., at the Lawrence Township Hall, Tad Moody will speak about "the unseen residents" of the County Poorhouse. Those attending will also have an opportunity to sign up for a tour afterwards.

Additionally, to kick off the 2026 season, a special Yard Sale will fill the front lawn on April 25, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. All booths are welcome except for guns, alcohol and yard sale clothes. Set up begins at 9 a.m. To reserve a space, call (269) 500-1450.

For museum updates, visit the museum's Facebook page, on the web at: vanburencountyhistoricalsociety.org, or call (269) 500-1450 for more information.

Richland, MI, man faces property title fraud charges on Almena Twp home

A Richland, MI, man faces two felony charges following a property title fraud investigation in Almena Township, according to a press release from the Van Buren County Sheriff's Office.

Van Buren County Sheriff Daniel Abbott said that the Van Buren County Sheriff's Office conducted a fraud investigation regarding a house and property for sale in the 22000 block of M-43 Highway, Almena Township.

Through the investigation, it was learned that the suspect George Demarkus Parnell, 40, of Richland, requested a showing of the property that was listed online through a realtor. Parnell made an offer on the property and home that was initially agreed upon; however, Parnell did not honor the terms of the buy/sell agreement.

The purchase of the property was immediately terminated. Parnell then proceeded to file multiple liens against the property through the Van Buren County Register of Deeds Office, therefore clouding the property title.

The report was submitted to the Van Buren County Prosecutor's Office who then authorized the felony charges of real property - fraudulent conveyances and real property- encumber without lawful cause.

Parnell was arrested and transported to the Van Buren County Jail, where he is currently being held on bond.

VBISD receives $16,000 grant to support partnership with SH Center for the Arts

LAWRENCE - The Van Buren Intermediate School District (VBISD) has announced it has been awarded a $16,000 grant from the Michigan Arts and Culture Council (MACC) to support a new partnership with the South Haven Center for the Arts.

This funding will help connect local artists with school districts and out-of-school-time (OST) programs across Van Buren County. Through this initiative, students will have access to high-quality, hands-on art and music experiences designed to foster creativity, enhance social-emotional development, and increase overall student engagement.

The program aligns closely with VBISD's mission to provide equitable and enriching opportunities for all learners. By leveraging strong community partnerships, the district continues to expand learning beyond the traditional classroom, bringing real-world creative experiences directly to students throughout the county.

In addition to benefiting students, the initiative strengthens connections between schools and the broader community while supporting local artists in meaningful roles as educators and mentors.

This collaboration highlights the impact of strategic partnerships in enhancing both student outcomes and community vitality.

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SH Planning Commission sends revised master plan to City Council

James Windell

After months of discussion and revision of the South Haven Master Plan, the Planning Commission is now sending it back to the City Council.

The City of South Haven's official Master Plan was adopted in 2018 and provides a long range vision document covering roughly a decade. The Master Plan includes community description and demographics; land use and zoning guidance; transportation and infrastructure planning; parks, recreation, and cultural facilities; utilities, emergency services, and airport planning; and future land use maps and development goals. In short, the 2018 Master Plan was designed as a policy foundation for zoning, capital improvements, and long term development decisions.

Earlier this year, the Planning Commission sent a revised Master Plan to the City Council for approval. The City Council objected to the language in three different places and sent it back to the Planning Commission to deal with the areas the City Council thought should be changed.

In March, 2026, the specific task before the Planning Commission was to address those objections and approve new language in certain sections of the revised Master Plan that would address those objections.

When the agenda item was introduced during that March meeting, Kelly Getman-Dissette, City Zoning Administrator, read over the portions of the Master Plan that had proposed changes. She said that on Page 63 of the plan (Chapter 4, Future Land Use & Zoning Plan), language was added to address point two of the Council objections and "states that residential land use would not be appropriate in areas with environmental contamination without proper remediation, any residential land use must be compatible with the surrounding areas, and maps 9-16 that relate to coastal resilience should be considered in any decision to rezone."

She went on to state that also on Pages 64 and 65 of the plan (Chapter 4, Future Land Use & Zoning Plan), language was added to address point three of the City Council objections and provides additional detail regarding future consideration of low impact commercial uses in the RM-1 zoning district. She added that, "The property at 89 North Shore Drive on the Future Land Use map has been changed to Multi-family/ Attached Residential/Resort."

She said that staff removed "commercial land use designation" for that property.

Finally, she pointed out that language was added on Page 64 of the plan (Chapter 4, Future Land Use & Zoning Plan) to address point four of the Council objections. "This states that the property commonly known as 120 Baseline Road has been identified as an area where residential land use is appropriate for single family homes or attached residential dwellings and not resorts," Getman-Dissette said. "Specifically, workforce and missing middle housing would be most appropriate."

In the March 5 Planning Commission meeting the new language in the specific sections was approved and the Planning Commission voted to direct the City staff to arrange a public hearing on the language changes.

That public hearing was held in the regular meeting of the Planning Commission held on April 9, 2026. With no citizens objecting to the proposed revisions, the Planning Commission voted to approve the Master Plan and to return it to the City Council. It is now up to the City Council to consider approval of the complete Master Plan, including the changes that were made by the Planning Commission.

PP Community Chorus to present spring concert

PAW PAW - The Paw Paw Community Chorus will present its 26th Spring Concert, Sunday, May 3, at 4 p.m., at the Paw Paw United Methodist Church, 420 W. Michigan Ave., Paw Paw.

The chorus, under the direction of Theresa Vaughn, will be accompanied on piano by Evonne Heystek.

The following selections will be presented by the chorus: "A Stephen Foster Medley"/Arr. by Jon Washburn, "Cross The Wide Missouri"/ Adapted and Arranged by Don Besig and Nancy Price/ Jami Bond-Flautist, "Thankful" by Carole Bayer Sager, David Foster and Richard Page/Arr. by Mark Hayes/ Kelly Touchtone-Signer, "Wade in the Water"/Traditional Spiritual/Arr. by Mark Hayes, "Bring Us Hope" by Ruth Elaine Schram/Samantha Thomas-Cellist, "The Impossible Dream" by Joe Darion and Mitch Leigh/Arr. by Mark Hayes, "Hallelujah" by Leonard Cohen/Arr. by Roger Emerson, "Joshua (Fit the Battle of Jericho)"/ Arr. by Kirby Shaw, "What the World Needs Now Is Love" by Hal David and Burt Bacharach/Arr. by Kirby Shaw.

Members of the chorus include Jennifer Antisdale, Jami Bond, John Boynton, Leslie Buhl, William Buhl, Vicky Meyer Burkett, Denise Campagna, Jackie Coons, Becky Elmore, Terry Goetsch, Judy Halseth, Linda Hassler, Jil Hoekstra, Sue S. Knudstrup, Wynonia Mankowski, Joy Martin, Jon Mills, Kathy McCloskey, Stephen McCloskey, Margaret McNeil, Viva Nelson, Jan Ogden, Lenore Orozco, Loise Perkins, Cayla Perry, Pat Peters, E. Ike Porter, Joy Porter, Lois Richardson, Connie Ruch, Bruce Safbom, Leonda Kessinger Shroyer, Marcia Sikkema, Michele Sivley, Gerry Stackhouse, Cindy Stephan, Marlene Stoops, Doris Stratton, Anna Vervoort, Kathy Weisner, Grace Zimmerman, and Eleda Zygadlo

Although there is no admission charge to this concert, voluntary donations are very much appreciated.

For further information, contact Joy Martin at (231) 577-8334, Bruce Safbom at (630) 817-0100, or Theresa Vaughn at (269) 668-4631.

SH City Council discusses capital improvements

By James Windell

A Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is a multi year planning and budgeting tool that governments use to identify, prioritize, and fund major long term investments. Those long-term investments include such things as buildings, parks, utilities, roads and other infrastructure. Essentially, a CIP is a roadmap for how a community will maintain and improve its physical assets over the next several years.

At a workshop on Monday, April 6, 2026, the South Haven City Council met to lay out what big projects South Haven needs, when they should happen, how much they'll cost, and how they'll be paid for. As is typical for CIPs, the CIP for South Haven spans the next several years.

With Public Works Director Dana Burd making the 90-minute presentation, the members of the City Council received a comprehensive report that covered the major investments held by the City.

Burd started his report by talking about the electric utility. He noted that the final phase of the 12th Avenue circuits rebuild are planned for next year, and that this will improve the ability to switch power among circuits. He said that substation construction and phases one and two of the circuit rebuild are complete, and he said that the remaining work is being combined into the next phase for next year. The construction budget for the rebuild will be about $1.4 million.

Burd then talked about facilities and city buildings. He said that the Center for the Arts obtained a grant for window reconstruction and that the CIP shows that the total project cost with a city match would be a $15,000 match within a $36,900 total cost. He also stated that the Center for the Arts needs wall brick repairs on the east wall.

He said that the City Hall, which was built in 1973, is currently undergoing elevator code compliance work due to changing Michigan codes. He also indicated that the ramps, stairs, and foundation project is moving toward a bid. He said that this project would cost about $217,000 with potential foundation repair costing as much as $89,000. Burd commented that construction would require a temporary access ramp.

The elevator code upgrades, Burd told the City Council, could be pushed to 2027–2028 to avoid overlapping with the ramps and stairs project.

The building housing the Department of Public Works is in need of security upgrades with locks and cameras in progress with Information Technology. Fire suppression updates have been completed based on inspection findings. Also, interior renovation has been completed this year creating three new workspaces to accommodate interns and other staff.

They are also exploring developing Blue Star Highway access to the DPW. Burd said that direct access from Blue Star Highway with a permanent paved driveway would improve safety and equipment movement. However, the cost and scope of such a driveway has yet to be determined.

In addition, the DPW has storage needs and they are looking at options for indoor storage, exterior space, and increased pallet storage.

In discussing the City's marinas, Burd said that façade improvements and HVAC equipment is needed at the Southside Marina. Additionally, the Army Corp of Engineers is expected to dredge the federal channel in late spring or early summer. This dredging will be limited roughly to the channel and bend area. However, the City is pursuing additional dredging and working to secure a 5-year dredge permit.

When reviewing the City's parks, Burd said that Packard Park renovation is a priority. Since the pricing for that renovation came in high, the plan is to do the renovation in phases. The next phase, Burd noted, will focus on interior renovation of the restroom and bathroom building. They will explore possible grants for the exterior phase which will be in the future.

The Optimist Tot Lot baseball refresh was also discussed, as was adding shade furniture in Riverfront Park. He said that ADA restroom improvements continue citywide, and that automatic door locks will be installed.

On the North Beach, light pole work and painting is anticipated in the future. On the South Beach, changing rooms and bathroom upgrades are regarded as long-term projects and may take place around 2031–2032. However, near-term plans include porta johns to be used due to masonry and window repair work after a fire. Among lighting concerns, Burd said that residents report glare, but that downward/ shielded fixtures, and shielding/deflectors can be added to some LED streetlights upon request.

Burd said that cemeteries are separated into a distinct CIP tab due to large upcoming needs – such as road and drive repaving -- and growing demand for columbarium spaces.

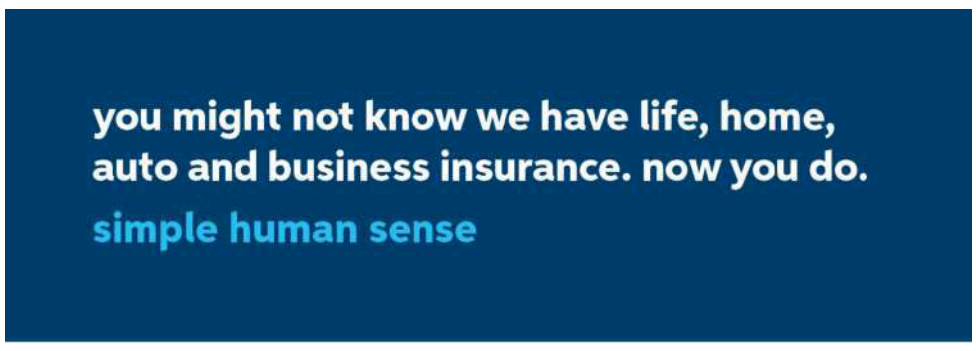
In terms of parking lots work, Burd noted that Eagle Street and Quaker Street lots are targeted for work next year. He commented that the pavilion project includes surrounding parking lot work.

Burd reported that the City invests about $200, 000 annually to repair sidewalks. The plan is to prioritize the worst sidewalks based on staff and engineering reviews as well as resident reports.

He also stated that about half of local roads are reported to be in poor condition. He went on to say that their strategy would emphasize preventative maintenance (doing crack sealing and patching) in order to keep "good roads good" and avoid costly reconstructions. There will be one reconstruction project on the road near the water filtration plant on Erie due to curb and asphalt failure. A northside streets project is planned for next year.

As one of the last items Burd talked about, he said that next year will be a high replacement year for utility trucks and city vehicles. He estimated that it may cost as much as $1.5 million for replacement vehicles due to end-of-life equipment.

City Council members raised questions about some of the projects. Although the CIP indicates the City planning for the future, it is the budget that decides what actually gets funded. City Council members will meet later this month to discuss the City's budget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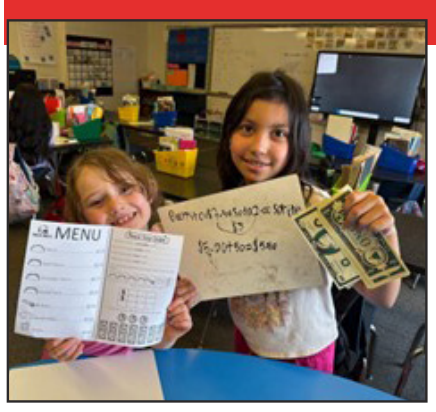
BLOOMINGDALE ELEMENTARY: 3RD GRADERS VISIT AIR ZOO!

On March 6, Bloomingdale Elementary's third-grade classes visited the Air Zoo. Students learned about air and space history. They also had a great time enjoying all the exhibits and rides!

BLOOMINGDALE ELEMENTARY: UPDATES FOR OUR 2ND GRADE:

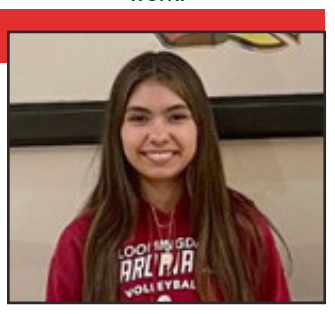


Second graders have been working on writing personal narratives to express their own experiences, thoughts, and feelings. Mrs. Dykstra's class wrote a St. Patrick's Day themed narrative paragraph about why they are lucky. In math, second graders are working on counting coins and word problems with money. This is especially tricky in an online shopping world! Mrs. Sager's class incorporated some real world examples. They practiced ordering food from fast food menus, totaling the price of their lunch, and making change from their $10 budget.

PULLMAN ELEMENTARY: MARCH STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

Congratulations to our March Students of the Month: Analisia Cleto, Laydin Forker, Bentley Johnson, Matthew Rawson, Thiago Garcia, Adrina Serrano, Leah Morales-Perez, Jazelle Washington, Hailey Mears, Zachariah Wadley, and Ulises Estrada. These students show their Cardinal PRIDE every single day! Keep up the great work!

KIMBERLY MENDEZ GOMEZ



Bloomingdale High School is proud to share that Kimberly Mendez Gomez has been selected as our school's representative to attend Girls State 2026 at Michigan State University in East Lansing from June 14–20, 2026. This is a tremendous honor and a reflection of Kimberly's leadership, character, and potential. We are excited for her to represent Bloomingdale in this outstanding civic leadership experience. Congratulations, Kimberly!

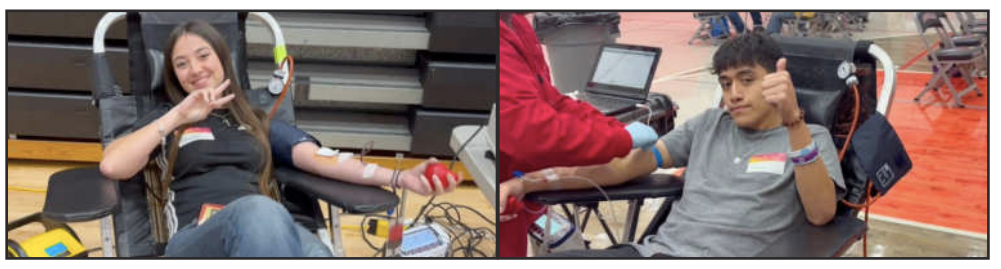
BIZTOWN FIELD TRIP

On Tuesday, March 17, our 6th grade students visited BizTown to participate in an engaging learning experience focused on workforce readiness, financial literacy, and economics. During the program, students operated businesses, managed bank accounts, voted, and worked within a simulated economy, allowing them to apply classroom learning in a meaningful, real-world setting. This hands-on experience strengthened their understanding of financial literacy, work readiness, and entrepreneurship. Our students were highly engaged throughout the day and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to take part in a full-day simulation of a functioning economy.

FINANCE PARK FIELD TRIP

On Tuesday, March 10, our juniors and a few seniors visited Finance Park to participate in an immersive financial literacy experience focused on personal finance and budgeting through a hands-on, real-world simulation. During the program, students were assigned a "life persona" and used tablets to manage realistic budgets that included expenses such as housing, food, transportation, and utilities, while being supported by volunteers throughout the experience. Our students were highly engaged in this valuable learning opportunity and expressed appreciation for the chance to participate in such an innovative and practical experience that connected classroom concepts to real-life financial decision-making.

BLOOMINGDALE HIGH SCHOOL BLOOD DRIVE



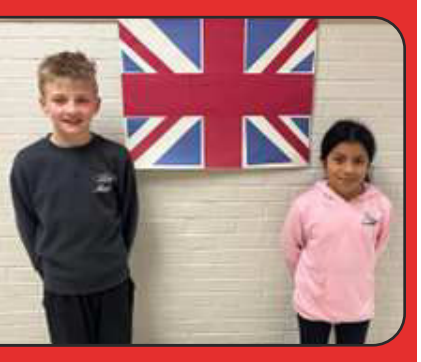
The Bloomingdale High School chapter of the National Honor Society hosted a blood drive in the high school gym on Thursday, March 12th. Student members of NHS served as volunteers, preparing snacks and drinks, as well as coordinating the donor signup and schedule. A Bloomingdale record 54 pints of blood were collected throughout the day on Thursday helping save as many as 162 lives. "The BHS student body has such an incredible service oriented and charitable mindset" said NHS sponsor Alan Bobalik "they are excited to donate every time we host a new blood drive and new students are eager to participate as soon as they turn 16."

MARCH MONTH OF READING HIGHLIGHTS

READING MONTH CELEBRATION:

Throughout the month of March, we have been celebrating Reading Month. Our theme was focused on the Winter Olympics in which each class was assigned a country to represent and learn about.

4th Grade represented Great Britain and Japan in our March Reading Olympics!



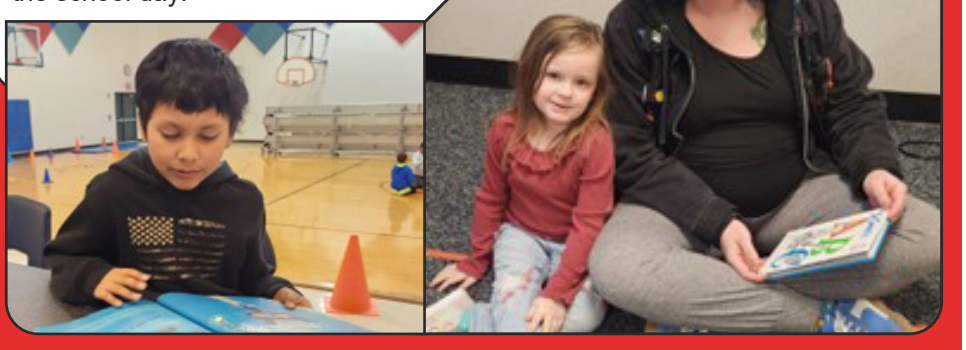
Pullman Elementary:

GUEST READERS HELP CELEBRATE READING MONTH

We had lots of wonderful guest readers join us this March for Reading Month. Thank you to everyone who took time out of their busy day to read with our students. We truly appreciate it!

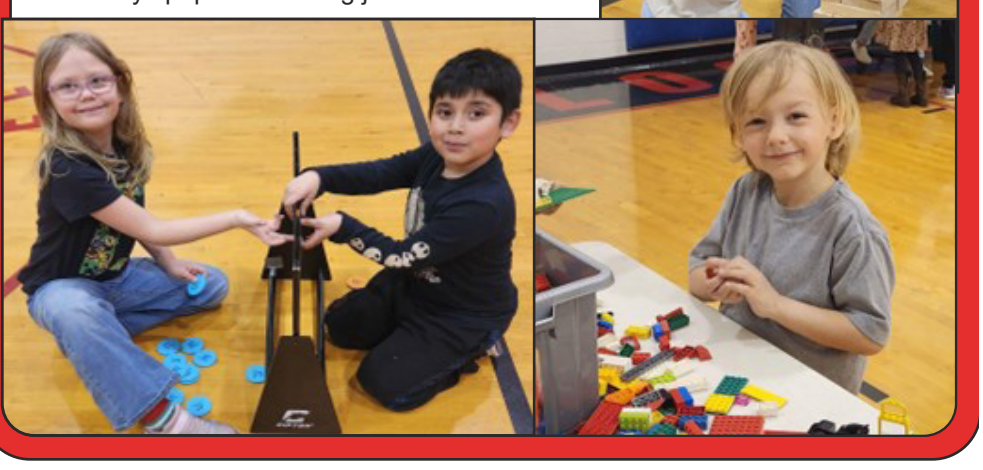
BREAKFAST WITH BOOKS

We loved having so many families join us to spend time reading with our students. Everyone enjoyed the snacks and stories. It was a special way to start the school day!



READING MONTH ENDS WITH A FUN-FILLED CELEBRATION

We wrapped up March is Reading Month with a special celebration. Thank you to Mrs. Vorndran for organizing the event and to all of our volunteers for helping make it a success. Students had a blast taking part in the activities, enjoying treats, and experiencing the always popular "reading jail"!



HOLOCAUST PRESENTER

On the evening of Thursday, March 13, Bloomingdale Middle and High School hosted a community Holocaust presentation featuring Holocaust survivor Irene Miller, which was organized by Ms. Mete. The event was well attended, with 48 community members present. In addition, student presentations were held on Wednesday, March 11 and Friday, March 13. The presentations were impactful and well received, with positive feedback from students, staff, and parents regarding the educational value and significance of hearing Ms. Miller's firsthand account of history, resilience, and hope.

MANY THANKS ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE CLASS

Many thanks to Mr. Serdel and Mr. Remington for talking to the environmental science classes about how the water drains off the parking lots, where it goes afterwards, and all sorts of neat details. The big blueprints are soooo cool!

Did you know the high school roof drains into pipes that go under the parking lot? Did you know that our roof is made with the same stuff as pool liners? Did you know there's an abandoned oil well out in the woods?

We greatly appreciate the time they gave to us and how they connected our in-class learning to real life.

SCHOOLS OF CHOICE
APRIL 6 THROUGH AUGUST 28
Applications for the Schools of Choice program are being accepted for the 2026-2027 school year. Act now to make Bloomingdale Public Schools your child's stepping stone to success!
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Applications are available at all school buildings offices and online at bdalecards.com
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VIEWPOINT

Here's why a printed weekly newspaper is important

MIKE'S MUSINGS

MIKE WILCOX
n PUBLISHER n

Robert Tomlinson, our news director in Three Rivers, gave a terrific speech to the local Rotary Club about the importance of your local newspaper. I thought I would share a portion with you.

"With our twelve weekly newspapers the mission is the same. To bring you the news of our area with accurate, truthful, and informative reporting. Every week, I'm out and about at meetings, (and so are 20 other reporters we employ) events, festivals, and many sporting events to capture the happenings of our beautiful county and talk with the movers and shakers that make our community what it is.

One of the questions I get asked sometimes is this: Why does a hard-copy local newspaper matter in the Year of our Lord 2026? And the statistics surrounding local journalism means this question is, unfortunately, a legitimate one. According to Northwestern University, the number of newspapers published in the United States has dropped by almost 40 percent since 2005, and daily circulation nationwide since the turn of the century has dropped from between 50 and 60 million to now just over 15 million as of the end of 2025. Over 130 newspapers alone closed shop in 2025.

My usual response to those who ask why local newspapers matter is this: It is the most truthful and thorough way to get the news of what your town and its government are up to on any given week. Nowadays, social media like Facebook and Twitter cannot be fully trusted to give you the complete story, and most of what people post can be described as hearsay, gossip, and even outright lies at times. What they value is outrage, discourse, and cheap clicks rather than the truth, which is what I believe ultimately should matter in today's society, even if that truth may be tough to swallow and challenge previously held beliefs.

I also believe that local newspapers are the last bastion of American democracy, especially in the divisive times we live in today. And I don't mean the big, national newspapers that are owned by people who have never worked in a newsroom in their lives. I'm talking about ones that care about their local community, care about the people in the community, and want to see it succeed while acknowledging its flaws, shortcomings, and worries.

We are the only print newspaper outlet to be at the city and county meetings, the local township meetings, and some of the school board meetings, letting you know everything that goes on as best we can. While we cannot be at everything going on, we do our best to make sure that we cover the news that is impactful and relevant for the community and its future. Do you want to know which roads are getting paved next? We've got that. Do you want to know what tax money was spent on at the local city commission meeting? We've got that. Do you want to know about the next big festival coming to town? We've got that too.

What you won't find, however, is rumors or gossip like you'd find on Facebook. There's a lot that's being said about social media being assignment editors for many national and local journalists nowadays. While social media can be helpful at times with some things as a local journalist, like I said a bit ago social media is not the end-all, be-all to be fully informed about the inner workings of the community. That comes from publications like ours."

I couldn't have said it better. Kudos to Robert for a helluva speech, and much thanks to those that consider their weekly newspaper a must read.

Opinion: Jazz Appreciation Month leads to reflections about being a jazz writer

By James Windell

You may not be aware of this, but every April is Jazz Appreciation Month. This special tribute to jazz was created by the Smithsonian National Museum of American History in 2001.

As I was reminded of this recently, I thought, in keeping with the spirit of a special month for jazz, I would write about some of my experiences with jazz.

I was writing a weekly column for a small-town newspaper in 1978 when I talked my way into the job as the jazz critic for the Oakland Press in Pontiac, Michigan. Since I had learned to love jazz starting when I was about 10 years old, getting hired to write about jazz was a dream come true.

The main reason for this was because as the jazz writer for a daily newspaper it meant that I could go to any jazz event in southeastern Michigan – which I did for some 15 years. Although I worked fulltime at another job, it was a flexible job, and I could arrange my schedule to frequent nightclubs, bars, and concert venues whenever I wanted. Along the way I had some incredible experiences which involved meeting and interviewing many of my jazz heroes.

In fact, my first interview with a well-known jazz musician was with the great flute player, Herbie Mann. He was very kind and gracious to me, and I still remember things he said in that first interview. But I would go on to talk to dozens of the greats in jazz. Some of the jazz musicians I got to meet and talk to included Woody Herman, Benny Goodman, Maynard Ferguson, Buddy Rich, Mel Torme, Elvin Jones, Cleo Laine, Dizzy Gillespie, J.C. Heard, Cab Calloway, Earl Klug and Milt Jackson.

As I reflect back on those years when I was writing about jazz, there are a few experiences that stand out in my memory. One highlight was going to Count Basie's 75th birthday party in Detroit and getting to meet the great band leader. Another was the first time I talked to Woody Herman sitting in a booth at a bowling alley in Waterford. I also felt very privileged to be able to talk to Dizzy Gillespie on several occasions. And several years being able to listen to the aging veterans of New Orleans jazz when the Preservation Jazz Band came to Meadow Brook Music Festival.

But there are other special moments that stand out for me.

For instance, once I took my four-year old son Jason to a Maynard Ferguson concert at Meadow Brook Music Festival in Rochester, Michigan. Maynard and I had talked on the phone before he arrived in Detroit, and he invited me to come backstage during the intermission. So, Jason and I went backstage to see him.

When he took a look at Jason, who was a cute little blond, he grabbed him up in his arms and said he was going to introduce him to his band. He left me standing there talking to his trombone player. Fifteen minutes later he returned Jason.

Ferguson and I talked about me becoming his PR Manager, but that never quite worked out.

One summer night I was in Baker's Keyboard Lounge in Detroit when the famous alto saxophone player Sonny Stitt was performing. I was always a real square, as many of the jazz musicians would probably have described me. This night was no different. I was sitting in a booth alone across from the stage, and I was dressed in a seersucker suit with a thin tie. As Stitt played, I was jotting notes in my reporter's notepad.

In the middle of a solo, Stitt stopped playing and said looking straight at me: "Hey, Man, are you with the FBI or something?"

I told him no, I was just a reporter. He said "Humpf!" and began playing again.

After writing a story about the Canadian flutist Alexander Zonjic, he called me up and asked me to be his PR Manager. I agreed and that was a relationship that would last for 10 years. I spent a lot of time hanging out with Zonjic as well as the musicians in his band, and I saw him go from a musician known mostly in Windsor and Detroit to a national headliner.

Not that I had much to do with his success. He was his own best press agent because he has a friendly and outgoing personality. But I thoroughly enjoyed getting to be involved in his recordings and the two of us co-produced a concert that he did with the wonderful jazz pianist Bob James.

Certainly, getting to talk to jazz greats was an honor and privilege, but an unexpected reward from my years as a jazz writer was receiving letters from jazz musicians who read my articles or reviews. Two of my favorite letters came from Dave Brubeck and Nancy Wilson. While gratifying to read these letters, to me they spoke volumes about the character of the musicians who sent such kind and thoughtful notes to an unknown jazz writer.

But as I look back on that period of my life as a jazz critic, it was a heady era of my existence when I could spend my nights in bars and nightclubs and claim I was working – all while soaking up the improvisations of some of the greatest jazz musicians who ever lived.

Child abuse, domestic violence reported in Gobles

Van Buren County Sheriff's Office Uniform Response and the Van Buren County Sheriff's Office School Resource Deputy handled a child abuse/domestic violence situation in Gobles. "There was substantial evidence that abuse occurred on more than one child, and the mother was abused as well," said Van Buren County Sheriff Daniel Abbott. The suspect was lodged for the incident and is facing multiple charges. "I cannot stress enough about if you suspect things like this going on, please contact law enforcement so it can be investigated," said SheriffAbbott.

"Our office just purchased three lights for our drones. The lights will assist with inside building searches and other searches in which lighting is needed. This is another tool we can use to help keep law enforcement and first responders out of harm's way," said Sheriff Abbott.

Uniform Response handled a larceny complaint in Bloomingdale Township. Several items were stolen from the property, and the victim is dealing with several squatters living there. Some of the missing items include a dump trailer, Toro zero turn mower, EZ Go green golf cart, several minibikes, and misc. other items. "If you have any information on this case or know where these items are, please call our office," said Sheriff Abbott.

Van Buren County Sheriff's Office Sergeant Weers assisted Michigan State Police (MSP) on a crash in which the driver fled on foot prior to law enforcement's arrival. "Sgt. Weers put up our drone and was able to locate the suspect who was hiding in the dark. The infrared lens picked up the suspect who was laying down and covered himself with leaves, dirt, and debris. The sergeant was able to guide in the troopers to take him into custody. The driver now faces several charges for the incident. Great teamwork with everyone involved once again," said Sheriff Abbott.

Uniform Response handled a larceny in Gobles. The victim was at a store and dropped her phone and wallet by accident. "The suspect saw the items, picked them up, and left the store with them. The deputy who responded reviewed security cameras and was familiar with the suspect. The victim cancelled the credit cards prior to them being used. The suspect was interviewed at his residence and admitted to the incident. A female at the residence had a warrant for her arrest, so she was taken into custody for the warrant. The suspect now faces charges for the incident," said Sheriff Abbott.

Uniform Response handled 721 calls for service in March, with 414 traffic stops. For the year, Uniform Response is at 2,139 calls for service with 1,008 traffic stops. Dispatch handled 8,156 phone calls in March, which puts them at 23,141 for the year. Those calls include landline, 911, talk to text, and administration non-emergency line calls.

Uniform Response handled a larceny complaint in Keeler Township. "Suspects climbed onto an irrigation system and cut off the copper wiring on some of it. There have been other things happening in the area as well with the same happening. This appears to be taking place in the late hours of the night. Anyone with any information on this is asked to call our office," said Sheriff Abbott.

"Our Narcotics Unit and SWAT Team executed a search warrant in Hartford Township. This was an ongoing investigation by the Narcotic detectives that led to the search warrant. Two individuals were inside the residence as well as several dogs upon executing the search warrant. Several controlled substances were located along with digital scales, packaging materials, and firearms. Detectives did locate a hidden compartment inside a bedroom wall. Detectives utilized a reciprocating saw to access the hidden compartment and recovered approximately 10 grams of methamphetamine inside it. The male suspect was lodged and now faces multiple felonies and misdemeanors for the incident," said Sheriff Abbott.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Democrat Party supplanted by Social Democrats

Dear Editor

The Democrat Party of the past 100 some years is dead and has been supplanted by the Democratic Socialists. Born of the same roots as Vladimir Lenin's Social Democrats (the same Lenin responsible for the democide and murder of at least 7-12M people) and Karl Marx's Communist Party. Remember, Lenin stated that socialism is simply a necessary step towards communism.

The whole premise of Karl Marx's philosophy of communism is simply a matter of hating anyone who is better off than you are and then justifying the confiscation of what someone else has earned and redistributing it to those who have not earned it. I'll limit most of my quotations herein to those of Thomas Sowell the noted economist and historian who once said "Envy was once considered to be one of the seven deadly sins before it became one of the most admired virtues under its new name, social justice." Historically communism has primarily flourished in poverty stricken and or ignorant cultures. Thanks to the complete failure of the American education system at the hands of progressives, we now see this happening here at home.

In place of any constructive social contribution, the democratic socialists resort to a dumbed-down version of the Doo Dah Parade they deceptively refer to as their no kings' rallies. To further exhibit their ludicrous tantrums, speciously referring to President Donald Trump as a king. Even after Obama lied to the American people about Obamacare and threatened to fine American citizens for not paying for insurance to Biden requiring all American citizens to get the unproven and often ineffective Covid vaccines or lose their jobs. We also witnessed Obama and Biden completely disregarding and misrepresenting our Constitution while weaponizing our U. S. Justice Department and IRS to punitively punish and imprison their political enemies, namely conservatives and Christians. Just like communist regimes around the world, they did this to accumulate power and wealth for themselves and their cronies. Unlike Obama and Biden, President Trump and many in his administration have taken considerable income cuts to serve in this administration and the American people.

At the March 28 national no kings' protests, after years of deceiving the American people by claiming that they are patriots, we witnessed the New Democratic Party protest shoulder to shoulder with not only Antifa and their usual paid protestors, but also with the American Communist Party. Then they continue to lie about who finances their activities. Indivisible, who takes credit for the no kings' movement is funded by no less than the America hating oligarch George Soros through his Open Society Foundation as well as the Chinese Communist Party through Neville Singham's People's Forum as well as other international miscreants.

Both Marx and Lenin despised Christianity and realized that to succeed in their evil endeavors they must first eliminate people's Christian faith in order to replace morality with their debased secular ideology.

For decades, the American left, supported by the American education system and main stream media have promoted the false narrative that our founder's believed in the separation of church and state. Substantiated by countless historical documents, America is a Christian Republic by our founder's design and the left knows that they cannot prevail in a Christian nation.

All this emphasizes the glaring element that logic has never been the strong suite of the communist movement. To demonstrate this, simply attempt to have an amicable conversation with one. They will shout you down, blow whistles and horns, scream in megaphones and bang drums but they are incapable of an intellectual conversation. They are devoid of critical thinking or civil discourse. As a simple exercise stop by the next no kings protest in a town near you. Approach any of these angry, entitled mostly white liberals, paid protestors and agitators and ask them what they are specifically protesting against and what better solutions do they propose. Don't worry this won't take you long as they have nothing to offer other than juvenal illogical rants, hate and bitterness. Again, to quote Mr. Sowell "One of the painful signs of dumbed down education is how many people are unable to make a coherent argument. They can vent their emotions, question motives, make bold assertions and repeat slogans, but they are not used to reasoning."

Simply inquire, if capitalism is so evil, name at least one successful, secure and prosperous communist or socialist industrialized nation. None exist now or throughout history. To quote the late economist Walter E. Williams "Prior to capitalism, the way people amassed great wealth was by looting, plundering and enslaving their fellow man. Capitalism made it possible to become wealthy by serving your fellow man."

In true communist fashion, after my last published letter to the editor, a local liberal actually chastised a local newspaper editor for publishing my letter, hiding behind the cowardly veil of protecting our community from my so-called hate speech with nothing more to substantiate their "feelings" other than predictably calling me a racist and misogynist. Marx and Lenin would have been proud of such obtuse and tyrannical behavior.

"If they attack you personally it means they have not a single political argument left." Margaret Thatcher.

John R. Young

THE COURIER LEADER
PAW PAW FLASHES
SOUTH HAVEN BEACON

PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY WILCOX NEWSPAPERS, LLC
PO Box 189, Allegan, MI 49010
(269) 657-3072 • wilcoxnewspapers.com

Publisher - Mike Wilcox
Graphics- Liz LaValle
Reporters - Paul Garrod
James Windell
IT - Jordan Wilcox

PERIODICAL RATE POSTAGE PAID AT PAW PAW, MI 49079-0129
Postmaster-Send address changes to:
PO Box 189, Allegan, MI 49010

Sheriff urges county drivers to be aware of Amish population on roadways

Michigan is home to more than 50 Amish communities, representing over 18,000 residents across 52 settlements statewide. These communities include multiple families, schools, and church districts, all of which rely on walking, bicycling, and horse and buggy travel as part of daily life. Their presence on rural and state roadways is significant, and they deserve the same respect, safety considerations, and roadway awareness afforded to every Michigan resident.

A rise in vehicle speeds and driver distraction has contributed to an increase in crashes involving Amish roadway users. In 2023, there were 37 Amish related traffic crashes in Michigan, and in 2024 there were 30. Many of these incidents resulted in fatalities or life altering injuries. These crashes occur throughout the year, January through December, with the majority happening during daylight hours rather than in the dark.

Van Buren County Sheriff Daniel Abbott said, "We've had three crashes in roughly the last year in our county, and several factors contributed to the crashes."

The cases are pending prosecution, and Sheriff Abbott could not go into detail about them. "What I can say is that if all three drivers obeyed the laws these crashes would not have happened."

Sheriff Abbott arranged a meeting last year with the Amish community in the Bloomingdale area, with the Van Buren County Road Commission also attending. At that meeting, Sheriff's Office personnel discussed with the Amish community some ideas to help with safety traveling on the roadway.

"We went over different ideas such as strobe lights being added to the top of the buggies. We showed them different ones that operate off batteries and explained how they have made a difference with school buses, road commission plow trucks, small plow trucks, etc. We also showed them highly visible reflective vests to wear on buggies, bikes, walking, etc. Since then, several have been doing this in the Bloomingdale area. The meeting was well attended and received by the Amish community," said Sheriff Abbott.

He concluded, "I cannot stress enough about being aware of your surroundings when driving in Van Buren County, especially with our Amish population being on the roadway on a daily basis."

Things to remember when driving near horse drawn carriages:

- Carriage drivers are not required to have a driver's license, which means operators may be very young or less experienced.
- There are no seat belt or car seat requirements for horse drawn carriages and young children or infants are often held on a rider's lap.
- Lighting and reflective materials are required on carriages; however, many Amish communities voluntarily use these safety features.
- Horses can spook easily. Approach and pass slowly and leave plenty of space between your vehicle and the horse.
- Only pass when roadway markings allow it and do so at a reduced speed.
- Avoid using your horn.

Michigan Laws Applying to Amish Buggies

1. Slow-Moving Vehicle (SMV) Emblem Requirement
   - Under MCL 257.688 (Michigan Vehicle Code), any vehicle that cannot exceed 25 mph on public roads must display the slow-moving vehicle (SMV) emblem:
     - ◊ A fluorescent orange triangle with a red reflective border.
     - ◊ Mounted on the rear, centered or slightly left, 2–6 feet above the road surface.
   - This applies directly to horse-drawn buggies.
   - The emblem must be visible from at least 500 feet in daylight and nighttime.

Note: Some Amish communities object to the orange triangle on religious grounds. In those cases, red reflective tape and lanterns are sometimes used instead, but Michigan law formally requires the SMV emblem unless there is a negotiated exemption.

2. Lighting Requirements
   - Per MCL 257.684 and MCL 257.688, buggies operated between sunset and sunrise (or in poor visibility) must display:
     - ◊ At least one white light on the front (visible from 500 ft).
     - ◊ At least two red lights or lanterns on the rear (visible from 500 ft).
     - ◊ Reflectors or reflective tape to outline the buggy's rear.

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THURSDAY Bible Study - 7 p.m.

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info@decaturnewhopecommu-nity.net

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668-3263
www.mattawancc.com
mattawancommunitychurch@gmail.com
Pastor Eric Baird
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Mattawan Lions Club holds community carnival

MATTAWAN- On Saturday, April 11, the Mattawan Lions Club hosted a fun-filled Community Carnival at the Antwerp Activity Center, here. The event featured a wide variety of games and prizes for children of all ages, creating a lively and welcoming atmosphere for families in the community.

Generous local sponsors helped make the event a success, including Mattawan Mechanical Services, Ralph Moyle Trucking, Mol-Son, WDP, and Mattawan Family Eye Care, who supported several carnival games.

The club also received help from Miss Mattawan and Little Miss Mattawan, as well as the Mattawan Leo Club. “Their support and volunteer efforts helped ensure the event ran smoothly. The Mattawan Lions Club is grateful for their assistance and could not host such events without the extra help,” said Karol Chopp, a Mattawan Lions Club member. “The kids had a great time and enjoyed all the games and prizes!” said Chopp

Ribbon cutting held for new Lawton Business

The Lawton Downtown Development Authority held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Wednesday, April 1, on Main Street to celebrate the opening of the Whistlestop Cafe. The business is owned by sisters Samopphie and Tory Dietz, who previously worked for the diner’s two former owners before launching their own restaurant, The Skillet, in Kalamazoo. After four years in business there, the sisters returned to Lawton and reopened the former Porch Rocker Cafe as the Whistlestop on March 9. Shown in photo are Tory and Sam, along with family and DDA board members Tom Osborne and Donna Dluge, and Mark Cichos.

Courier-Leader photo/Paul Garrod

Garcia named Kiwanis March Student of the Month

The Paw Paw Kiwanis Club has announced that Irma Garcia has been named as the March Student of the Month. Garcia was nominated by teacher Paul Dewitt, who said, “Irma is a Teacher Assistant (TA) in my 5th hour Freshman U.S. History class. She works with a wide variety of students acting in various roles daily including: interpreting language for ESL students, working one on one to support student understanding of vocabulary, reading aloud tests and quizzes, and working in a small group to help demonstrate and focus on individuals who wants to do well and gives freely of her time to share strategies that have worked for her. She is kind and patient and works well with all learning styles. She has helped contribute to the classroom community and is a great example of how seniors give back to our school. Ana plans to continue her education to become a teacher.” Shown in photo, from left, Teacher Paul DeWitt, student Irma Garcia and Kiwanis member Elaine Kuklinski.

Plow Day at Dorr Farm held

The annual Plow Day at the Charlie Dorr Jr., Farm, located north of Lawrence, saw 10 area residents take part in the event on Saturday, April 11. The event began in 2019.

Courier-Leader photo/Paul Garrod

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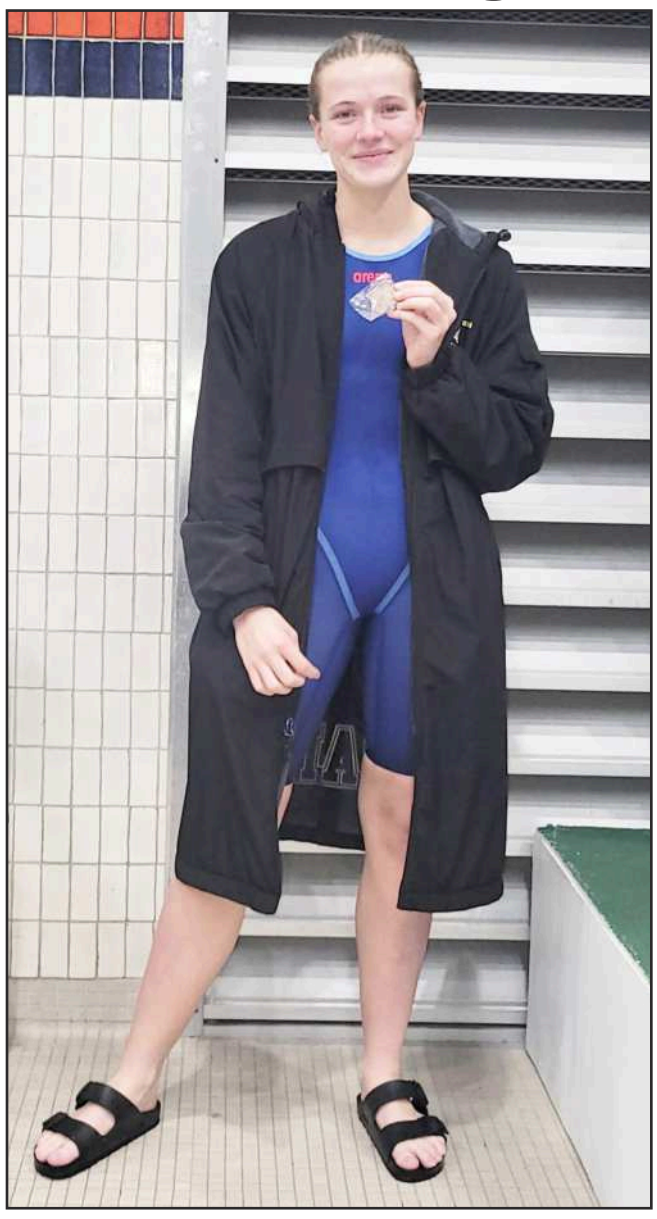
South Haven girls roll over Bridgman



Sofia Grieves had some key hits for South Haven.

By John Raffel
Correspondent

South Haven Rams earned a 16-3 victory over Bridgman last Thursday in the first game of a doubleheader.

South Haven scored the first inning after Reagan Hahn singled, scoring one run.

Addison Dekoning tripled to right field, which helped South Haven Varsity Rams tie the game 2-2 the top of the second.

South Haven scored seven runs on seven hits in the top of the fourth inning. Erin Bos, Madi Duda doubled, scoring two runs, Sofia Grieves, Julia Wiley, Kiersten Chalupa and Mia Holtmann drove in runs.

South Haven scored five runs on one hit in the top of the sixth inning. An error scored two runs, Dekoning grounded out, scoring one run, an error scored one run, and Grieves grounded out, scoring one run.

Dekoning earned the win for South Haven Varsity Rams. She gave up seven hits and three runs (two earned) over six innings, striking out nine and walking two.

South Haven had 13 hits in the game. Hahn went 3-for-5 at the plate to lead the winners.

In the second game, Duda drove in four runs on three hits to lead South Haven past Bridgman 12-11 on Thursday. Duda singled in the second scoring two, singled in the third scoring two, and singled in the fifth scoring one.

Both offenses were strong at the plate as South Haven collected eight hits and Bridgman 11 in the high-scoring affair.

South Haven took the lead in the top of the second. Duda singled, scoring two runs, to give South Haven a 5-4 lead,

South Haven the top of the third had five runs on three hits to take the lead, 10-7. The biggest blow in the inning was a single by Duda that drove in two.

Grieves earned the win for South Haven. She gave up nine hits and nine runs (seven earned) over three and one-third innings, striking out two and walking three. Addison Dekoning collected the save.

Grieves collected two hits for South Haven.

Lawrence track team has strong performance

Carolina Mancera, a standout Lawrence basketball player, recently won the shot put and discus in track action.

By John Raffel
Correspondent

LAWRENCE — The Lawrence Tigers delivered one of their strongest early-season showings at the Dale Shook Invitational, earning multiple event wins and several top-three finishes across the lineup.

Girls Highlights

Aurora McQueen led the way with victories in both the 1600 and 3200, controlling the distance events from start to finish. In the 400, Kaylin Leyva placed second and Zoey Soppelsa finished third, giving Lawrence two of the top three spots. Mariana Vinaja added a runner-up finish in the 800, continuing the team's strong middle-distance performance.

Lawrence shined in the relays, taking second in the 4×200 and winning both the 4×400 and 4×800. The 4×200 featured Kaylin Leyva, Colleen McCaw, Carolina Mancera, and Mariana Vinaja. The 4×400 squad of Kaylin Leyva, Carolina Mancera, Mariana Vinaja, and Zoey Soppelsa claimed the win, while the 4×800 team of Jara Gomez-Fernandez, Aurora McQueen, Kacey Reyes, and Mariana Vinaja also finished first.

In the throws, Carolina Mancera won the shot put and discus.

Boys Highlights

Stephen Pavelek earned a third-place finish in the 400, and Evan Broyles placed second in the 3200 with a strong closing effort. In the field events, Alexander Gardner added a third-place finish in the discus.

The boys also reached the podium in the 4×400 relay. The team of Jake Theragene, Stephen Pavelek, Andon Offord, and Xavier Glover secured third place to close out the meet.

Bangor soccer team is hopeful

By John Raffel
Correspondent

BANGOR — The Bangor girls varsity soccer team is off to a promising start this season, showing steady improvement and strong teamwork with each match.

"The players' dedication and commitment are evident as they continue to grow," coach Antonio Robles said

The Lady Vikings opened the season on March 26 against Saugatuck, losing 3–1. Andrea Barajas scored Bangor's lone goal, while goalkeeper Solexey Calderon delivered an outstanding performance with 12 saves, keeping the team competitive throughout the match.

On April 9, Bangor traveled to Buchanan and narrowly lost a hard-fought contest, 4–3. Isabella Macedo led the offense with two goals, and Magdaly Gonzalez added another.

"The team demonstrated great resilience with a strong second-half effort that created numerous scoring

opportunities. Calderon contributed four saves in goal," Robles said.

The Lady Vikings earned their first victory of the season on April 13 with a dominant 4–0 win over

Marcellus in their conference opener. Andrea Barajas led the attack with a hat trick, while Magdaly Gonzalez added one goal. Defensively, the team was solid, and Calderon recorded two saves tosecure the shutout.

"Overall, the team continues to show positive development. Strong offensive performances from Barajas, Gonzalez, and Macedo have been crucial, while Solexey Calderon has provided consistency and leadership in goal," Robles said. "The team's chemistry and determination are building a strong foundation for the remainder of the season.

Record: 1–2 overall, 1–0 in conference play.

Next Game: The Lady Vikings will host Hartford on April 15 at 5 p.m. in another important conference matchup.

South Haven tennis team loses matches

By John Raffel
Correspondent

SOUTH HAVEN — South Haven's tennis team dropped two matches last week.

South Haven 0, Kalamazoo Hackett Catholic Prep - 8,

Singles:

No. 1 - Paige Zeigler, Kalamazoo Hackett Catholic Prep def. Addy Cook, South Haven, 1-6 , 0-6.

No. 2 - Marissa Toweson, Kalamazoo Hackett Catholic Prep def. Harley Nail, South Haven, 0-6 , 0-6.

No. 3 - Elizabeth Kennedy, Kalamazoo Hackett Catholic Prep def. Leah Becker, South Haven, 0-6 , 0-6 .

No. 4 - Caroline Zygadlo, Kalamazoo Hackett Catholic Prep def. Violet Burgoyne, South Haven, 0-6 , 3-6.

Doubles:

No. 1 - Ella Barry, Kalamazoo Hackett Catholic Prep - Carly Stanek, Kalamazoo Hackett Catholic Prep def. Maria Booth, South Haven - Amelia Lee, South Haven, 0-6 , 0-6.

No. 2 - Addy Holder, Kalamazoo Hackett Catholic Prep - Regan Ray, Kalamazoo Hackett Catholic Prep def. Mireya Arvizu, South Haven - Sheyla Gonzalez, South Haven, 0-6 , 6-4 , 1-6.

No. 3 - Lilliana Arechiga, Kalamazoo Hackett Catholic Prep - Lourdes Lopez, Kalamazoo Hackett Catholic Prep def. Remmi Rigozzi, South Haven - Regan Nail, South Haven, 4-6 , 1-6.

No. 4 - Sophia Johansson, Kalamazoo Hackett Catholic Prep - Amelia Wilson, Kalamazoo Hackett Catholic Prep def. Grace Armendariz, South Haven - Khloi Smith, South Haven, 0-6 , 1-6 ,

South Haven - 0, Buchanan - 8,

Singles:

No. 1 - Rebeca Ballesteros-Borrego, Buchanan def. Addy Cook, South Haven, 0-6 , 0-6.

No. 2 - Alex Paturalski, Buchanan def. Harley Nail, South Haven, 0-6 , 0-6.

No. 3 - Finley Kehoe, Buchanan def. Leah Becker, South Haven, 1-6 , 0-6.

No. 4 - Emily Holt, Buchanan def. Violet Burgoyne, South Haven, 0-6 , 1-6.

Doubles:

No. 1 - Morgan Weldy, Buchanan - Lillian Wegener, Buchanan def. Maria Booth, South Haven - Sarah Diaz-Salinas, South Haven, 0-6 , 0-6.

No. 2 - Taylor Sweeney, Buchanan - Ava Sears, Buchanan def. Mireya Arvizu, South Haven - Sheyla Gonzalez, South Haven, 0-6 , 0-6.

No. 3 - Madeline Tibbles, Buchanan - Isabella Gedert, Buchanan def. Remmi Rigozzi, South Haven - Regan Nail, South Haven, 1-6 , 1-6.

No. 4 - Addison Brown, Buchanan - Ava Brown, Buchanan def. Grace Armendariz, South Haven - Khloi Smith, South Haven, 1-6 , 0-6.

Bangor baseball at 4-0

By John Raffel
Correspondent

BANGOR — Things were expect to possibly get wild on the bases last Friday when Bangor Varsity Vikings took on Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Varsity Lakers. Bangor Varsity Vikings averages 11.8 steals per game, while Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Varsity Lakers swipes 4.8. Luke Remington leads Bangor Varsity Vikings with nine stolen bases this season, while Bradyn Harper leads Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Varsity Lakers with seven.

Last Time Out:

Bangor Varsity Vikings beat Comstock Varsity Colts 13-10. Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Varsity Lakers were defeated by Michigan Lutheran Varsity Titans 16-2.

Player Highlight:

Wyatt Schneider has played three positions for Bangor Varsity Vikings. Schneider's primary position is second base. Schneider is on a 2-game hitting streak. The infielder has hit 0.600 during the streak. Schneider has an on-base percentage of 0.583 this season thanks in part to a 0.500 average and one walk.

About Bangor Varsity Vikings:

Bangor Varsity Vikings will look to add to their 4-game winning streak. They are 4-0 overall this season. Brendon Jackson's 1.633 OPS leads Bangor Varsity Vikings. The right-handed hitter has a 0.800 OBP and a 0.833 slugging percentage this season. Terrance Payne leads Bangor Varsity Vikings with five innings pitched. The right-handed pitcher has a 0.00 ERA this season. Remington leads Bangor Varsity Vikings with 28 total fielding chances this season. Remington's primary position is catcher.

About Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Varsity Lakers:

Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Varsity Lakers has one win against three losses this season. Evan Watts's 0.885 OPS leads Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Varsity Lakers. The infielder has a 0.385 OBP and a 0.500 slugging percentage this season. Harper leads Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Varsity Lakers with 11 and one-third innings pitched. The left-handed pitcher has a 1.24 ERA this season. Anthony Jasheway leads Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Varsity Lakers with 38 total fielding chances this season. Jasheway's primary position is catcher.

Results

The games were cancelled so Bangor played Bloomingdale's April 13 and won 11-1 and 12-1 in a pair of five inning games.

Bangor has a 4-0 record.

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Paw Paw baseball team defeats Vicksburg

By John Raffel
Correspondent

PAW PAW — Paw paw baseball coach Derek Vanderburg said his team had a light schedule last week.

"We had a wild one against Vicksburg then ran out of light for game 2," he said. "Then the Williamston Invite got cancelled Saturday due to rain."

The game with Vicksburg was on April 8.

Varsity baseball takes Game No. 1 against Vicksburg with an offensive attack and defeats the Bulldogs 15-11. Bryn Carlsen got the win on the mound going 3 plus innings, allowed 5 hits, 0 ER, and struck out 3. Hayden Criger came in and recorded his first save by getting a groundout to end the game. Leading the hitting attack was Remi Dempsey, Ryan Holmes, and Gavin. Remi Dempsey went 2-5 with a deep double and 5 RBIs. Ryan Holmes was 2-3, 2 RBI's, 2 BB, 2 R, and a SB. Gavin was 2-4 with 2 clutch doubles, 2 RBI's, 1 BB, and a R. Caden Bowen added a double, 2 BB, and a SB. Maverick stayed hot by going 1-1 with an RBI, 2 BB, 2 HBP, and 2 runs. Benny added a single and 2 RBIs. Hayden Criger added a hard hit single.

In Game No. 2 the game was called due to darkness. After three innings the Bulldogs are up 13-2. The game will be resumed at a later date. The Red Wolves record now stands at 3-2.

Upcoming games:
April 14th DH at Edwardsburg
April 17th DH at home vs Harper Creek

South Haven baseball team tops Bridgman

Shortstop Jake Bosma puts the tag on a Dowagiac baserunner. Rightfielder Jadon Schneider agrees with the call from afar.

Jake Bosma slides safely into second base for a stolen base.

Isaac Chalupa pitched a two-hitter in 6-1 victory over Dowagiac. He struck out six batters and walked four.

By John Raffel
Corespondent

SOUTH HAVEN — South Haven is 6-3-1 overall and won 14-1 over Bridgman on Thursday.

South Haven got the lead the top of the first inning after an error scored one run. Jonathan Bevevino grounded out, scoring one run, and Wyatt Dotson doubled, scoring two runs.

South Haven scored six runs on eight hits in the top of the second inning. Jadon Schneider singled, scoring one run, Bevevino singled, scoring two runs, Dotson doubled, scoring one run, and Quin Hayes doubled, scoring two runs.

Max Verseput earned the pitching win for South Haven. The starting pitcher gave up three hits and one run (zero earned) over five innings, striking out six and walking one.

South Haven had 15 hits. Knox, Schneider, Burrows, Dotson, Bosma, and Bevevino each collected two hits for South Haven. Dotson and Bevevino were tough to handle back-to-back in the lineup, as each drove in three runs for South Haven. Hudson stole two bases. South Haven had four stolen bases for the game.

South Haven was triumphant over Dowagiac 6-1 on Wednesday.

South Haven got on the board in the bottom of the first inning after Dowagiac committed an error, and Verseput singled down the left field line, each scoring one run.

South Haven added one run in the third. Bosma singled to center field, making the score 3-1.

Chalupa earned the win for South Haven. The pitcher allowed two hits and one run over three innings, striking out six and walking four. Hayes pitched four innings in relief for South Haven. The hurler allowed zero hits and zero runs while, striking out five and walking two.

Verseput drove the middle of the lineup, leading South Haven with two runs batted in. The cleanup hitter went 2-for-2 on the day. Verseput and Hayes each collected two hits for South Haven.

Bosma collected four hits in four at bats, as South Haven defeated Dowagiac 10-5 on Wednesday (April 8) in the second game to complete the sweep. Bosma doubled in the fifth inning, singled in the first inning, singled in the second inning, and singled in the fourth inning.

Dowagiac were the first to get on the board in the first when a steal of home scored one run.

South Haven got the lead in the bottom of the second when Knox grounded out, scoring one run, an error scored one run, and Verseput doubled, scoring two runs.

Dowagiac tied the game in the top of the fourth thanks to a double by Bacon-Baker, and a ground out by Cooper.

In the bottom of the fourth, South Haven Varsity Rams broke up the tie when Hiatt doubled, scoring two runs. Then a single by Bevevino followed to extend the lead to 7-4.

Dotson earned the win for South Haven. He surrendered one hit and one run (zero earned) over one inning, striking out three and walking one. Schneider started the game for South Haven and allowed five hits and four runs (two earned) over four innings, striking out two and walking four.

South Haven had 11 hits in the game. Verseput had three runs batted in. The right-handed hitter went 2-for-4 on the day. Fonseca stole two bases.

Paw Paw girls take first

By John Raffel
Correspondent

PAW PAW — Paw Paw's track teams hosted the Lions Invitational on April 11 at Falan Field.

Paw Paw girls had 170 points to win the eight-team field

The Paw Paw boys were second.

For Paw Paw girls, Taylor Thorpe won the 100 meters (12.95), and the 100 meters (26.29), Hayden Lemieux was third in the 1600 meters (6:10.88) and second in the 3,200 meters (13:26.16) Mecenzie Allen was first in the 100-meter hurdles (17.30) and high jump (5-0), Avery Huff was third in the 100 hurdles (18.75), and second in the 300 hurdles (5352). Jordan Zent was second in the shot put (26-8), Millie Strey won the discus (78-7).

For the Paw Paw boys, Silas Penning was first in the long jump (180-11.75), Jay Varney won the pole vault (12-0) and 300 hurdles (41.72), Silas Penning won the high jump (5-8), the 4x100 relay was first (45.33), and Ben Miller won the 200 meters (23.04).

Mattawan track boys earn first

By John Raffel
Correspondent

MATTAWAN — Mattawan boys were first with 181 points in the Paw Paw Lions Invitational on April 11.

The Mattawan girls wer second.

Gobles boys were fourth and girls third.

Lawton was fifth for both boys and girls.

Mattawan's Maceo Stork won the 800 meters (2:00.23) and the 1,600 meters (4:24.39).

Owen Fisher was first in the 3,200 meters (10:00.65). The 4x800 relay team won in 8:31.38.

For the Mattawan girls, the team of Chloe Bontrager, Claire Yakiwchuk, Annemarie Pelak and Ava Garcia was first in 52.1.

For Gobles girls, Madison Cooley was first (1:02.43) and Taylor Cooley second (1:06.38) in the 400 meters. Libby Smith won the 1,600 meters (5:30.19) and 3,200 meters (11:47.05), and the 4x200 relay was first (1:53.81). The 4x400 relay also won (4:32.33) as did the 4x800 relay (11:13.65).

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DOUBLE YOUR PLEASURE IN CADILLAC

Author and Tom Maat with two nice crappies

The wind was pushing us along at above the perfect speed. We were casting the Charlie Brewer Crappie Grubs. The west and northwest ends of Lake Mitchell have a nice mix of weedbeds and open-water slots. A mixed bag of mostly crappier, some dandy pumpkinseeds, and a bass or two were caught.

One hour into our morning fishing, the rain moved in. We could see the rain line approaching. It took about 30 minutes to reach us. Quickly, we packed up and headed to the northeast end of Lake Cadillac. This area is easy to find. Look for the area where the park is, the walking trails, and across the street, the athletic field and the old military hut buildings.

The corner of the area is filled with old wooden dock pilings. Mixed in, you will find a few patches of cabbage weeds. Bordering this area and following the hiking trails is a really nice line of cabbage weeds. We fished this area for an hour before the rain, and the cold front hit.

One of the perks of fishing Lake Cadillac and Lake Mitchell is that one of the lakes are generally fishable under almost any weather condition. These two lakes are connected by a canal.

Vacationers will enjoy the sandy swimming area that borders the Canal on the Lake Mitchell side. Across the street and accessible to Lake Cadillac via the tunnel is the State Campground. Campers can park their boats overnight in the Canal, but it's first-come, first-served.

Crappie fishing is good on both lakes. Some years we land better fish on Mitchell, other years on Cadillac. Mitchell has far more walleye, lots more, in my opinion. Cadillac might have bigger walleye, but the numbers are impressive on Mitchell.

Pike fishing is a toss-up between the two lakes. We catch larger pike on Cadillac, more on Mitchell. Mitchell has a healthy population of pumpkinseeds and an outstanding population of large bluegills. Cadillac is no slouch, with a very diverse population of panfish and bass. Thus, a great reason to fish these connected lakes.

We color-code our graphs so that all depths between eight and twelve feet appear in a different shade of blue from the rest of the lake. This is the fastest way to find the weedbeds on Mitchell and the humps on Cadillac.

You can get as complicated as you wish. We keep things simple. Plastic tails are used when chasing crappies. The Brewer grubs are a favorite, as are the action tails. We might opt for a slip float with a marabou jig tipped with a minnow when drifting or when the wind takes the pleasure out of casting the weed edges.

Our walleye fishing is done primarily with three-inch Brewer grubs on a jighead or the Whistler jighead. Some days we fish a slip bobber with a leech on one rod and a lip bobber for the crappies.

Bluegills and pumpkinseeds are caught on a mini worm harness rig or a slip float. Bass and pike on spinners or the Rapala Husky Jerks.

On every trip to Cadillac/Mitchell, we walk the 40 acres of diverse habitat at the DNR visitors center. The center is located on the north side of the Canal. The walking trails are in excellent condition, and the various loops take you around marshes, wetlands, and Hemlock stands.

Turtles, a few bears, deer, muskrats, various species of ducks, geese, and many songbirds will be spotted from time to time. It's really a cool place to walk. The visitor's center is free, and the inside is very impressive with all of the cool displays. Fish, waterfowl, birds, and animals are mounted and on display, along with a history of the area. Once again, it's free.

This location offers fishing, archery, and mushroom-hunting classes, and, yes, you are in the center of the state's best morel area. You really need to stop in and check out what they have to offer during your visit. Remember, turkey season is kicking off, fishing season has started, and Bob's Gun and Tackle Shop is here to assist you.

Jack Payne

Payne is a member of OWAA (outdoor writers association of America). He is an avid outdoorsperson who enjoys fishing, hunting, hiking and cooking. This column will hopefully enhance your outdoor experiences. "While I may have some knowledge, I am very fortunate that I do know many true experts that share their knowledge with me," said Payne. "Together, hopefully we all can learn and experience more fun in the great outdoors."
Payne resides in southwest Michigan. His column will appear weekly in the Courier Leader/ Flashes.

Road Commission to begin guardrail vegetation control program

LAWRENCE - The Van Buren County Road Commission will begin its annual guardrail vegetation control program the week of April 13, or as conditions allow. This targeted maintenance effort will address overgrown brush and grasses surrounding roadside guardrails throughout Van Buren County, improving visibility and enhancing overall roadway safety. The program is expected to continue through April.

Licensed applicators from The Daltons, Inc. will perform the work, applying approved herbicides to vegetation located in front of, beneath, and behind selected guardrail sections. These treatments help ensure guardrails remain visible.

Residents with questions or concerns about the vegetation control program are encouraged to contact Brad Bolinger of The Daltons, Inc. at (574) 267-7511, or via email at: angie@thedaltonsinc.com.

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I SAW IT IN THE FLASHES

=• PUBLIC NOTICE •=

Porter Township
Van Buren County
88040 M-40 Lawton, MI 49065
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 11, 2026
Trustee Bitely called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Members present – Bitely, Nesbitt, Packer, and Smith. Also present – Attorney Moraitis and seven guests.

- Motion by Packer with support by Nesbitt to approve the minutes of the regular meeting on February 11, 2026. Voice vote – all yes. Motion passed.
- Motion by Packer with support by Smith to approve the Treasurer's report subject to audit. Voice vote – all yes. Motion passed.
- Motion by Nesbitt with support by Packer to approve the bills as presented. Roll call vote – all yes. Motion passed.
- Motion by Nesbitt with support by Smith to sign a 2026 contract with Trugreen for weed control services at Township Hall and Cemeteries, at a cost not to exceed $2,420. Roll call vote – all yes. Motion passed.
- Public Hearing to open lawn maintenance bids will be Wednesday, April 8, 2026 at 6:45 pm
- Motion by Packer support by Nesbitt to adjourn the meeting at 7:41 pm. Voice vote – all yes. Motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted,
Heather Smith
Porter Township Clerk

State of Michigan
36th Judicial District
Judicial Circuit • County Probate
ORDER FOR SERVICE BY PUBLICATION/ POSTING AND NOTICE OF ACTION
Case No. 26-075542-CH
Plaintiff Name:
Lorie Spangler and Sheila Marie Gaston
Plaintiff Attorney:
Albert W. Laaksonen, II P43920
Laaksonen Law Offices, P.C.
226 1/2 East Michigan Ave.
Paw Paw, MI 49079
269-655-1035
V.
Defendant:
THE ESTATE OF ELEANOR ARENDT, DECEASED, AND HER UNKNOWN HEIRS, DEVISES AND ASSIGNEES
TO: All Defendants stated above
IT IS ORDERED:
1. You are being sued in this court by the plaintiff to **quiet title in a certain piece of real estate located at 38474 46th Street, Paw Paw, Michigan 49079, tax id#80-03-024-006-00.** You must file your answer or take other action permitted by law in this court at the court address above on or before _____. If you fail to do so, a default judgment may be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint filed in this case.
2. A copy of this order shall be published once each week in the Courier Leader for three consecutive weeks, and proof of publication shall be filed in this court.
Date: 4/10/2026
Judge Susan Metzger

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
DECEDENT'S TRUST ESTATE
("Decedent") Alice K. Ransler
Date of Decedent's Birth: October 30, 1945
Name of Trust: Ransler Living Trust dated March 15, 2006
NOTICE TO CREDITORS:
Decedent, Alice K. Ransler, died January 16, 2026. There is no personal representative of Decedent's estate to whom Letters of Authority have been issued. Creditors of Decedent are notified that all claims against the Decedent, Decedent's estate, and/or Decedent's trust(s) will be forever barred unless presented to Brian Ransler and/or Paul Ransler, Trustee, within four (4) months after the date of publication of this notice.
Dated:_____
Brian Ransler
10524 Northfield Dr.
Zeeland, MI 49464
Paul Ransler
52923 CR 657
Paw Paw, MI 49079
Jason W. Wesseling (P85634)
WESSELING & BRACKMANN P.C.
6439 28th Avenue
Hudsonville, Michigan 49426
(616) 669-8185

STATE OF MICHIGAN
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
PROBATE COURT
COUNTY OF ALLEGAN
In the matter of the The Smith Family Revocable Living Trust dated October 7, 2002 Date of birth: June 8, 1936
TO ALL CREDITORS: *
NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The decedent, Ronald L. Smith died March 11, 2026
There is no personal representative of the decedent's estate to whom Letters of Authority have been issued.
Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the Trust will be forever barred unless presented to Donald J. Smith Trustee of The Smith Family Revocable Living Trust, under a Trust Agreement
4/13/2026
Attorney:
Mika Meyers
Neil P. Jansen P41922
900 Monroe Ave NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
616-632-8000
Trustee:
Donald J. Smith
620 137th Avenue
Wayland, MI 49348
616-889-8131

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
TRUST ESTATE
Estate of Randall L. Peat Date of Birth: February 8, 1948
NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The decedent, Randall L. Peat, Settlor of the Randall L. Peat Trust dated May 13, 1999, died on February 9, 2026.
Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the decedent, his estate, or his trust will be forever barred unless presented to Madelynn M. Peat, Trustee of the Randall L. Peat Trust, within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.
Attorney:
Sara A. Nicholson
Warner Norcross + Judd LLP
180 East Water Street,
Ste. 7000
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007
269.276.8100
Trustee:
Madelynn M. Peat
47802 45th Street
Paw Paw, Michigan 49079
269.358.2399

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
ESTATE OF EVA JANE QUIGNO
TO ALL CREDITORS:
EVA JANE QUIGNO, who lived at 300 White Oak Road, Apt. 2, Lawton, MI 49065, died on February 15, 2026. No estate has been filed with any probate court, and it is anticipated that no estate will be filed with any probate court, there being no assets requiring probate. Creditors of EVA JANE QUIGNO are notified that all claims against EVA JANE QUIGNO will be forever barred unless presented to MICHAEL SCOTT at 9132 "B" Drive North, Battle, Creek, MI 49014, or Attorney CHRISTOPHER MORAITIS, or both, within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.
Dated: April 8, 2026
SCHUITMAKER LAW OFFICE, P.C.
Attorney CHRISTOPHER MORAITIS (P87052)
Attorney for the decedent
181 West Michigan Avenue, Ste 1
Post Office Box 520
Paw Paw, MI 49079
(269) 657-3177

State of Michigan
Probate Court Kalamazoo County
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
DECEDENT'S ESTATE
Case No. 20240502DE
Judge Gary C. Giguere Jr.
Estate of **RONALD WAYNE HASSING**
Date of Birth: 7-27-1934
TO ALL CREDITORS:
NOTICE TO CREDITORS:
The decedent, Ronald Wayne Hassing, died 11-6-2023.
Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Adeline B. Hassing, Personal representative, or to both the probate court at 1536 Gull Road Kalamazoo, MI 49048 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.
Date: 4-1-26
Personal Representative:
Adeline Hassing
9576 West Gave
Kalamazoo, MI 49009
269254-4302

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Gary L Verstrate; Atty: Schneiderman & Sherman, P.C. - Schneiderman & Sherman, PC; 1st Pub: 4/16/2026; Atty File #: 26-000977-1; Insurer: (unknown)
SHORT FORECLOSURE NOTICE - VAN BUREN COUNTY Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on June 04, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. MORTGAGE: Mortgagor(s): Gary L. Verstrate and Linda F. Verstrate, husband and wife Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. ("MERS"), as mortgagee, for lender and lender`s successors and assigns Date of mortgage: May 8, 2018 Recorded on May 18, 2018, Liber 1668, on Page 815, Foreclosing Assignee (if any): loanDepot.com, LLC Amount claimed to be due at the date hereof: One Hundred Four Thousand One Hundred Twenty-Two and 88/100 Dollars ($104,122.88) Mortgaged premises: Situated in Van Buren County, and described as: THE WEST SEVEN AND ONE-HALF (7 1/2) ACRES OF THE NORTH FORTY-SEVEN AND ONE-HALF (47 1/2) ACRES OF THE NORTHEAST FRACTIONAL QUARTER (1/4) OF SECTION 5 (5), TOWN TWO (2) SOUTH, RANGE FIFTEEN (15) WEST. Commonly known as 54961 24th Ave, Bangor, MI 49013 The redemption period will be 6 month from the date of such sale, unless abandoned under MCL 600.3241a, in which case the redemption period will be 30 days from the date of such sale, or 15 days from the MCL 600.3241a(b) notice, whichever is later; or unless extinguished pursuant to MCL 600.3238. If the above referenced property is sold at a foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of Act 236 of 1961, under MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. loanDepot.com, LLC Mortgagee/ Assignee Schneiderman & Sherman P.C. 23938 Research Dr, Suite 300 Farmington Hills, MI 48335 248.539.7400 1590678
(04-16)(05-07)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Linda Buell; Atty: Orlans; 1st Pub: 4/9/2026; Atty File #: 26-003115; Insurer: GNMA
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM on MAY 7, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information.
Default has been made in the conditions of a mortgage made by Linda Buell, to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Team Mortgage Company LLC, its successors and assigns, Mortgagee, dated March 29, 2024 and recorded April 30, 2024 in Liber 1765, Page 405 Van Buren County Records, Michigan. Said mortgage is now held by NewRez LLC, by assignment. There is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of One Hundred Eighty Thousand Nine Hundred Ninety-Nine and 9/100 Dollars ($180,999.09).
Under the power of sale contained in said mortgage and the statute in such case made and provided, notice is hereby given that said mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at public venue at the place of holding the circuit court within Van Buren County, Michigan at 1:00 PM on MAY 7, 2026.
Said premises are located in the Village of Mattawan, Van Buren County Michigan, and are described as:
Lot 3, Except the South 12 feet thereof, Block 1, Kinne's Addition to the Village of Mattawan, according to the recorded plat in Liber P of Plats, Page 163, Van Buren County Records.
57177 S Main St, Mattawan, Michigan 49071
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA §600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale.
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale, pursuant to MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damage to the property during the redemption period. FinCEN reporting will be required of all successful purchasers, absent a lawful exemption.
Dated: April 9, 2026
File No. 26-003115
Firm Name: Orlans Law Group PLLC
Firm Address: 1650 West Big Beaver Road, Troy MI 48084
Firm Phone Number: (248) 502.1400
(04-09)(04-30)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Violet Hesser; Atty: Schneiderman & Sherman, P.C. - Schneiderman & Sherman, PC; 1st Pub: 4/2/2026; Atty File #: 26-000785-1; Insurer: (unknown)
SHORT FORECLOSURE NOTICE - VAN BUREN COUNTY Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on May 07, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. MORTGAGE: Mortgagor(s): Violet Hesser a/k/a Violet R. Hesser and Jack D. Hesser, wife and husband Original Mortgagee: The Huntington National Bank Date of mortgage: April 26, 2004 Recorded on May 5, 2004, Liber 1413, on Page 165, Foreclosing Assignee (if any): None Amount claimed to be due at the date hereof: Thirty-Five Thousand Seven Hundred Twenty-Three and 77/100 Dollars ($35,723.77) Mortgaged premises: Situated in Van Buren County, and described as: Lot 53 of plat of Suburban Acres according to the recorded Plat thereof, Van Buren County Records. Commonly known as 20197 Meadow Dr, Gobles, MI 49055 The redemption period will be 12 month from the date of such sale, unless abandoned under MCL 600.3241a, in which case the redemption period will be 30 days from the date of such sale, or 15 days from the MCL 600.3241a(b) notice, whichever is later; or unless extinguished pursuant to MCL 600.3238. If the above referenced property is sold at a foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of Act 236 of 1961, under MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. The Huntington National Bank Mortgagee/Assignee Schneiderman & Sherman P.C. 23938 Research Dr, Suite 300 Farmington Hills, MI 48335 248.539.7400 1589321
(04-02)(04-23)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Robert Lee Smith; Atty: BETTER CHOICE NOTICE SOLUTIONS - BETTER CHOICE NOTICE SOLUTIONS; 1st Pub: 4/2/2026; Atty File #: 26-04850; Insurer: (unknown)
NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following Mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 01:00 PM, on May 14, 2026. The amount due on the Mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. Default has been made in the conditions of a Mortgage made by Robert Lee Smith to Rocket Mortgage, LLC, FKA Quicken Loans, LLC dated November 1, 2021 and recorded November 10, 2021 in Liber 1728 at Page 892, Van Buren County, Michigan. Said Mortgage is now held by Rocket Mortgage, LLC f/k/a Quicken Loans, LLC by assignment and/ or merger. There is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of $88,628.72. Said premises are located in Van Buren County, Michigan and are described as: Tax Id Number(s): 80-02-023-012-50 Land situated in the Township of Antwerp in the County of Van Buren in the State of MI PART OF THE NORTHWEST QUARTER OF SECTION 23, TOWN 3 SOUTH, RANGE 13 WEST, ANTWERP TOWNSHIP, VAN BUREN COUNTY, MICHIGAN, DESCRIBED AS COMMENCING AT THE NORTH QUARTER POST OF SAID SECTION 23; THENCE SOUTH ALONG THE NORTH AND SOUTH QUARTER LINE OF SAID SECTION, 376.00 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING OF THE LAND HEREIN DESCRIBED; THENCE CONTINUING SOUTH ALONG SAID NORTH AND SOUTH QUARTER LINE, 277.76 FEET; THENCE NORTH 89 DEGREES 21 MINUTES 30 SECONDS WEST, PARALLEL TO THE NORTH LINE OF SAID SECTION, 788.09 FEET; THENCE NORTH PARALLEL TO THE NORTH AND SOUTH QUARTER LINE OF SAID SECTION, 60.25 FEET; THENCE NORTH 89 DEGREES 21 MINUTES 30 SECONDS WEST, PARALLEL TO THE NORTH LINE OF SAID SECTION, 300.12 FEET TO THE WESTERLY RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF TERRITORIAL ROAD ALSO BEING THE EASTERLY RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF THE PENN-CENTRAL RAILROAD; THENCE NORTH 44 DEGREES 10 MINUTES 52 SECONDS EAST, ALONG THE LAST DESCRIBED LINE, 300.00 FEET TO A LINE WHICH IS 376.00 FEET SOUTHERLY OF AND PARALLEL TO THE NORTH LINE OF SAID SECTION; THENCE SOUTH 89 DEGREES 21 MINUTES 03 SECONDS EAST, ALONG THE LAST DESCRIBED LINE, 879.13 FEET TO THE PLACE OF BEGINNING. BEING SUBJECT TO THE RIGHTS OF THE PUBLIC IN THAT PART OF TERRITORIAL ROAD THAT LIES WITHIN THE ABOVE DESCRIPTION. NOTE: The Company is prohibited from insuring the area or quantity of the land. The Company does not represent that any acreage or footage calculations are correct. References to quantity are for identification purposes only. Commonly known as: 60441 26th St, Mattawan, MI 49071-9433 THE PROPERTY ADDRESS AND TAX PARCEL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER LISTED ARE PROVIDED SOLELY FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES. Said property is commonly known as 60441 26th St, Mattawan, MI 49071. The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA 600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale. If the property is sold at foreclosure sale, pursuant to MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damage to the property during the redemption period. TO ALL PURCHASERS: The foreclosing mortgagee can rescind the sale. In that event, your damages, if any, are limited solely to the return of the bid amount tendered at sale, plus interest. Please be advised that any third party purchaser is responsible for preparing and recording the Sheriff's Deed. If this is a residential Mortgage, the following shall apply: ATTENTION HOMEOWNER: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the Mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. THIS COMMUNICATION IS FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR. THIS IS AN ATTEMPT TO COLLECT A DEBT, AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. IF YOU: ARE A DEBTOR IN AN ACTIVE BANKRUPTCY CASE; ARE UNDER THE PROTECTION OF A BANKRUPTCY STAY; OR, HAVE RECEIVED A DISCHARGE IN BANKRUPTCY AND YOU HAVE NOT REAFFIRMED THE DEBT, THIS NOTICE IS FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY AND SHOULD NOT BE CONSTRUED AS AN ATTEMPT TO COLLECT A DEBT FROM YOU PERSONALLY. Dated: March 30, 2026 Attorney for the party foreclosing the Mortgage: Thomas E. McDonald (P39312) Brock & Scott, PLLC 5431 Oleander Drive Wilmington, NC 28403 PHONE: (844) 856-6646 File No. 26-04850
(04-02)(04-23)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Christopher P Martin; Atty: Johnson, Blumberg, and Associates - Johnson, Blumberg, and Associates ; 1st Pub: 4/2/2026; Atty File #: MI 26 7094; Insurer: (unknown)
NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE BY ADVERTISEMENT. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in VAN BUREN County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on April 30, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. MORTGAGE INFORMATION: Default has been made in the conditions of a certain mortgage made by Christopher P Martin and Tanya Martin, husband and wife, whose address is 15566 41st Street, Bloomingdale, Michigan 49026, as original Mortgagors, to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for AmeriFirst Financial Corporation, being a mortgage dated April 15, 2022, and recorded on April 25, 2022 in Liber 1737 Page 234, Van Buren County Records, State of Michigan and then assigned to Carrington Mortgage Services, LLC, as assignee as documented by an assignment recorded in Van Buren County Records, Michigan, on which mortgage there is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-NINE THOUSAND ONE HUNDRED NINETY-FOUR AND 49/100 DOLLARS ($129,194.49). Said premises are situated in the Township of Bloomingdale, County of Van Buren, State of Michigan, and are described as: THE SOUTH 20 ACRES OF THE EAST HALF OF THE SOUTHWEST QUARTER, SECTION 21, TOWN 1 SOUTH, RANGE 14 WEST, EXCEPT BEGINNING AT THE SOUTH QUARTER POST OF SECTION 21, TOWN 1 SOUTH, RANGE 14 WEST, THENCE NORTH 54 RODS TO THE PLACE OF BEGINNING, THENCE WEST 165 FEET, THENCE SOUTH 290 FEET, THENCE EAST 165 FEET, THENCE NORTH 290 FEET TO THE PLACE OF BEGINNING. Street Address: 15566 41st Street, Bloomingdale, Michigan 49026 The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless the property is determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA § 600.3241a in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of the sale. If the property is sold at a foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCLA § 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. THIS FIRM IS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION WE OBTAIN WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. ATTENTION HOMEOWNER: IF YOU ARE A MILITARY SERVICE MEMBER ON ACTIVE DUTY, IF YOUR PERIOD OF ACTIVE DUTY HAS CONCLUDED LESS THAN 90 DAYS AGO, OR IF YOU HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO ACTIVE DUTY, PLEASE CONTACT THE ATTORNEY FOR THE PARTY FORECLOSING THE MORTGAGE AT THE TELEPHONE NUMBER STATED IN THIS NOTICE. Dated: April 2, 2026 For more information, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing: Robert A. Blumberg (P87490) Johnson, Blumberg & Associates LLC 30 North LaSalle St., Suite 3650 Chicago, Illinois, 60602 312.541.9710 - Phone 312.541.9711 - Fax File No.: MI 26 7094
(04-02)(04-23)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Gladis M. Kovarik; Atty: Orlans; 1st Pub: 4/2/2026; Atty File #: 26-002958; Insurer: FHLMC
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM on APRIL 30, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information.
Default has been made in the conditions of a mortgage made by Frances M. Dee and Richard M. Dee, wife and husband and Arthur R. Kovarik and Gladis M. Kovarik, husband and wife, to National City Mortgage Services Co, Mortgagee, dated June 21, 2002 and recorded June 26, 2002 in Liber 1359, Page 543 and Loan Modification Agreement recorded on February 19, 2019, in Liber 1679, Page 727, Van Buren County Records, Michigan. There is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of Twenty-Six Thousand Two Hundred One and 2/100 Dollars ($26,201.02).
Under the power of sale contained in said mortgage and the statute in such case made and provided, notice is hereby given that said mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at public venue at the place of holding the circuit court within Van Buren County, Michigan at 1:00 PM on APRIL 30, 2026.
Said premises are located in the Township of Bloomingdale, Van Buren County Michigan, and are described as:
THE NORTH 128 FEET OF THE EAST 1/4 OF THE SOUTHEAST 1/4 OF THE SOUTHWEST 1/4 OF SECTION 11, TOWN 1 SOUTH, RANGE 14 WEST.
07010 37th St, Gobles, Michigan 49055
The redemption period shall be 12 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA §600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale.
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale, pursuant to MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damage to the property during the redemption period. FinCEN reporting will be required of all successful purchasers, absent a lawful exemption.
Dated: April 2, 2026
File No. 26-002958
Firm Name: Orlans Law Group PLLC
Firm Address: 1650 West Big Beaver Road, Troy MI 48084
Firm Phone Number: (248) 502.1400
(04-02)(04-23)

STATE OF MICHIGAN 36th CIRCUIT COURT – Van Buren County, 212 E. Paw Paw Street, Paw Paw, MI 49079; 269-657-8200. To: LEONIDES ALFONSO-PEREZ In Re: MARICELA ARENAS-AGUSTIN v. LEONIDES ALFONSO-PEREZ.
Case No. 25-075219-DC. Take Notice: A Request for Default Entry was filed on December 18, 2025, requesting the clerk to enter the default of Defendant for failure to plead or otherwise defend as provided by law and stating that the Defendant is not an infant or incompetent person or in the military service. The clerk approved the default entry on December 18, 2025, stating that the default of the Defendant for failure to plead or otherwise defend is entered.
A Motion for Entry of Default Judgment was then filed on February 11, 2026, requesting the court to grant Plaintiff sole legal and physical custody of the minor children of the parties, award Defendant no parenting time, and award child support accordingly. A hearing will be held on March 25, 2026, at 1:30 pm before a referee of the Friend of the Court in reference to the Motion for Entry of Default Judgment: Virtual Room A, Meeting ID: 292 853 1976. The result of a failure to answer or appear may be to bar or affect the person's interest in the matter.

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: ZACHARY T DEPIERRE; Atty: Potestivo & Associates - Potestivo & Associates; 1st Pub: 3/26/2026; Atty File #: 322007; Insurer: (unknown)
Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the Circuit Court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 01:00 PM, on April 23, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): ZACHARY T. DEPIERRE, UNMARRIED MAN Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for Ark-La-Tex Financial Services, LLC dba Benchmark Mortgage, its successors and assigns Foreclosing Assignee: PENNYMAC LOAN SERVICES, LLC Date of Mortgage: October 5, 2018 Date of Mortgage Recording: October 10, 2018 Amount claimed due on mortgage on the date of notice: $144,919.88 Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in the Township of Antwerp, Van Buren County, Michigan, and are described as: LOT 23, TERRITORIAL CREEK ESTATES 2, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF AS RECORDED IN LIBER 7 OF PLATS ON PAGE 31, VAN BUREN COUNTY RECORDS Commonly Known as: 22285 Wynsmythe Dr., Mattawan, MI 49071 The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale, or upon the expiration of the notice required by MCL 600.3241a(c), whichever is later; or unless MCL 600.3240(16) applies. If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, under MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. Attention Purchaser: This sale may be rescinded by the foreclosing mortgagee for any reason. In that event, your damages, if any, shall be limited solely to the return of the bid amount tendered at sale, plus interest, and the purchaser shall have no further recourse against the Mortgagor, the Mortgagee, or the Mortgagee's attorney. Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. This notice is from a debt collector. Date of notice: 03/26/2026 Potestivo & Associates, P.C. 251 Diversion Street, Rochester, MI 48307 248-853-4400 322007
(03-26)(04-16)

Continues on page B5

=• PUBLIC NOTICE •=

Continues from page B4

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Roger Miller; Atty: Team X; 1st Pub: 3/26/2026; Atty File #: 525440F02; Insurer: (unknown)
Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on April 30, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Roger Miller, Married Man
Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for lender and lender's successors and/or assigns
Foreclosing Assignee (if any): Freedom Mortgage Corporation
Date of Mortgage: June 2, 2023
Date of Mortgage Recording: June 16, 2023
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $195,202.77
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in Township of Waverly, Van Buren County, Michigan, and described as: Beginning at a point found by commencing at the East 1/4 post of Section 36, Town 2 South, Range 14 West, and running thence with bearings referenced to a survey recorded in Liber 1 of Surveys on Page 50, South 89 degrees 58 minutes 56 seconds West along the East and West 1/4 line of the East 1/2 of said Section 963.33 feet; thence South 00 degrees 19 minutes 43 seconds West 328.90 feet; thence South 54 degrees 10 minutes 48 seconds East 130.09 feet to the point of beginning of this description; thence South 33 degrees 54 minutes 11 seconds West 149.97 feet; thcncc South 54 degrees 10 minutes 48 seconds East 580.40 feet to the Westerly right of way of M-40 Highway; thence around a curve to the left with a radius of 2241.83 feet, along said Westerly right of way to the far end of a chord which bears North 33 degrees 54 minutes 11 seconds East 149.97 feet; thence North 54 degrees 10 minutes 48 seconds West 580.40 feet to beginning.
Common street address (if any): 46644 M 40, Paw Paw, MI 49079-8505
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: March 26, 2026
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515
1588204
(03-26)(04-16)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Frederick D. Cornelius; Atty: Team J; 1st Pub: 3/26/2026; Atty File #: 455668F06; Insurer: (unknown)
Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on April 23, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Frederick D. Cornelius, a married man, fee simple
Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for lender and lender's successors and/or assigns
Foreclosing Assignee (if any): U.S. Bank Trust National Association, not in its individual capacity but solely as owner trustee for RCF 2 Acquisition Trust
Date of Mortgage: March 21, 2003
Date of Mortgage Recording: April 14, 2003
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $141,236.77
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in Township of Paw Paw, Van Buren County, Michigan, and described as: The North 22 acres of the South 42 5/8 acres of the East 70.5 acres of the Northeast Quarter of Section 21, Town 3 South, Range 14 West, except the North 7 acres thereof.
Common street address (if any): 61398 40th St, Paw Paw, MI 49079-9753
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: March 26, 2026
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515
1588240
(03-26)(04-16)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Dale Kovach; Atty: Team H; 1st Pub: 3/26/2026; Atty File #: 528681F01; Insurer: (unknown)
Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on April 23, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Dale Kovach and Karen Kovach, husband and wife, as joint tenants
Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for lender and lender's successors and/or assigns
Foreclosing Assignee (if any): Lakeview Loan Servicing, LLC
Date of Mortgage: December 15, 2021
Date of Mortgage Recording: December 17, 2021
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $162,325.95
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in Village of Lawrence, Van Buren County, Michigan, and described as: The South Half of Lots 7 and 8 in Block 9 in Original Plat of the Village of Lawrence, according to the plat thereof as recorded in Liber D of plats, page 600, Van Buren County Records.
Common street address (if any): 130 S Elizabeth St, Lawrence, MI 49064-9604
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: March 26, 2026
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515
1588285
(03-26)(04-16)

ARLINGTON TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
52022 34TH AVENUE, BANGOR, MI. 49013
269-427-7300

The Arlington Township Planning Commission will hear a request for a Special Use Permit for Frida's Cantina; 53838 M-43, Bangor, Mi. 49013 Parcel #80-03-200-007 Date: May 14, 2026 at 6:00 PM at the Township Hall Persons in need of Special Accommodations should contact the Hall at least 4 days prior to the meeting.

Georgette Peterson, Supervisor

Public Notice
Antwerp Township

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Public Accuracy Test for the May 5th, 2026 Special Election Has been scheduled for Tuesday, Apri 28th, 2026 at 10:00 AM in the Township Hall Meeting Room, 24821 Front Ave., Mattawan, Michigan.

The Public Accuracy Test is conducted to demonstrate that the program and computer that will be used to tabulate the results of the election, counts the votes in the manner prescribed by law.

Chantel Reyna,
Antwerp Township Clerk

American with Disabilities (ADA) Notice
The township will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, to individuals with disabilities at the meeting/hearing upon seven-(7) days' notice to Antwerp Township. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact Antwerp Township by writing or calling.

Chantel Reyna
Antwerp Township Clerk
24821 Front Ave.
Mattawan, MI 49071
269.668.2615 x200

The Van Buren Intermediate School District is now accepting bids to remove and replace the TPO roofing membrane located at Van Buren Tech, 250 South Street, Lawrence, MI 49064, as outlined in the bid packet. Bid packets are available for download at www.vbisd.org under District Services – Business Office. Bids are due **April 27, 2026, at 2:00 PM** at the Van Buren Intermediate School District Business Office, 490 S. Paw Paw Street, Lawrence, MI 49064, at which time bids will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids received after that time will not be accepted and returned unopened. The Board of Education shall not accept a bid unless it includes both sworn and notarized familial affidavit and Iran linked business affidavit. The Van Buren Intermediate School District reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, to waive any irregularities which it deems to be in the best interest of Van Buren Intermediate School District, and the right to award the contract to other than lowest bidder.

FARMERS ARE REMINDED TO KEEP RIGHT-OF-WAY CROP FREE
"We Mow - So Don't Sow!"

As spring approaches and the planting season begins, the Van Buren County Road Commission is reminding area farmers to keep road rights-of-way clear for public safety and maintenance purposes. Crops must be planted at least 14 feet from the road's edge or behind the back slope of an existing ditch. Planting within the right-of-way is done at the farmer's own risk, and the Road Commission cannot offer compensation for any crop loss within that area, in accordance with Policy 2022-02.

The Road Commission performs regular mowing cycles throughout the growing season to maintain safe sightlines along roadsides and intersections. Any crops planted within the right-of-way will be mowed during normal maintenance operations. In late summer, the Commission also conducts chemical vegetation management to control brush and woody growth. Road rights-of-way are reserved for road signs, drainage, and public utilities, and are typically 66 feet wide (33 feet on each side of the road's centerline).

To review a copy of the Board of County Road Commission's Policy 2022-02, Right-of-Way Mowing, Brush Control & Spraying Policy visit the Road Commission's website at: https://www.vbcrc.org/policies, or contact the Road Commission's Managing Director, Bret Witkowski, at 269-674-8011, Extension 222, BretWitkowski@vbcrc.org. The Road Commission's Policy complies with the standards created by law (MCL 247.665b).

• CLASSIFIEDS •

• WANTED •

WE BUY OLD BASEBALL CARDS, OTHER SPORTS MEMORABILIA AND OLD VINTAGE COINS. CAN BE REACHED AT 517-416-1629. WE PAY CASH.

CLARK'S AUTO PARTS, INC. is buying cars, trucks & all metals for recycling. Lawrence, 674-4905 or 1-800-707-8650.

STANDING TIMBER. Top Michigan lumber manufacturer seeking landowners with 25 or more mature hardwood trees to sell. Qualityhardwoodsinc.com • 517-566-8061.

• SERVICES •

TIM'S STUMP GRINDING SERVICE- I believe in respectable service. 269-299-5052, 269-624-6884.

HAULING, CLEANING RECYCLING. Moving service. Right Quick Hauling. Dan Wydick, Dustin Wydick, Daniel Wydick, 423-8545. Serving since 1994.

FIELD PLUMBING & HEATING, INC. Services all brands of heating & cooling equipment in your home or business. 24/7 service for over 50 years, 269-674-3839.

BUYING JUNK CARS, trucks, scrap metal and farm machinery. Kalamazoo Metal Recyclers, 1525 King Highway, Kalamazoo. 269-381-1315.

CALL A PRO HANDYMAN SERVING LAWRENCE AND SURROUNDING AREAS 269-903-6397.

PERRY'S PERFECT PITCH PIANO TUNING Homes-Churches-Schools, Call 269-999-4440

• AUCTION •

ALL SECURE SELF STORAGE will hold sale of abandoned property at a public sale pursuant in 540.521-570.527: Public Auction: 4/28/2026 at or after 9:30a.m. EST: 37404 W Red Arrow Highway Paw Paw: Jenna Joostberns, 1.

MEDICARE GURU
Call
Janet Bontrager
Insurance Advisor
(269) 998-6977

FOR MORE INFO OR TO PLACE AN AD
Call (269) 657-3072 or 657-5080
BEFORE MONDAY AT 5PM
www.wilcoxnewspaper.com

NOTICE OF ELECTION
TO THE QUALIFIED ELECTORS OF THE GOBLES PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

Notice is hereby given that a Special Election for the GOBLES PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT will be held on Tuesday, May 5, 2026 The polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

THE PURPOSE of the Special Election is to vote on the following proposal:

GOBLES PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OPERATING MILLAGE RENEWAL PROPOSAL
EXEMPTING PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE
AND OTHER PROPERTY EXEMPTED BY LAW
34.7748 MILLS FOR 10 YEARS
Full text of the ballot proposition may be obtained at the administrative offices of Gobles Public Schools, 409 North State Street, Gobles, Michigan 49055, telephone: (269) 628-9390.

List of Polling Locations for the Election:

VOTERS LIVING IN:	POLLING LOCATION– ALL ARE HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE:
Almena Township	27625 CR 375, Paw Paw, MI 49079
Bloomindale Township	109 E. Kalamazoo St., Bloomingdale, MI 49026
Pine Grove Township	26520 CR 388, Gobles, MI 49055
Waverly Township	42114 M-43 Hwy, Paw Paw, MI 49079
City of Gobles	105 E. Main St., Gobles, MI 49055
Trowbridge Township (Allegan Co.)	26520 CR 388, Gobles, MI 49055

Absentee ballots are available for all elections; registered voters may contact the local clerk to obtain an application for an absent voter ballot.

To comply with the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), voting instructions will be available in audio format and in Braille. Arrangements for obtaining the instructions in these alternative formats can be made by contacting the township clerk in advance of the election. All polling locations are accessible for voters with disabilities.

This notice is given by authority of the County Clerk of Van Buren County, Michigan.

Suzie Roehm, Van Buren County Clerk

NOTICE TO ALMENA TOWNSHIP RESIDENTS

Almena Township will sponsor a ONE DAY Spring clean-up for the Township on Saturday, April 18, 2026

Hours are 8:00 am to 1:00 pm at the Historic Township Hall Parking Lot, located on CR 375, directly behind the Township Hall.

Attendants will be on duty to help receive materials for disposal. You must have identification to prove you are an Almena Township resident.

We will NOT accept the following:
Tires – Appliances, Cement, Chemicals, Paint Hazardous Materials – Leaves – Batteries - Loose Trash. Dead Animals - Rocks – Sand – Dirt – Concrete – Rubble – Building or Demolition Materials.

Almena Township
Joe Leduc, Supervisor

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